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CONTENTS.

Page

CHAPTER I

Prosecution of the Persian war—Rise of Athens to maritime empire, and consequent undermining of the aristocratical interest—Administration of Cimon—of Pericles—Induction of the Athenians—Commencement of the Peloponnesian war 1

CHAPTER II

Historians of the plague—Sketch of the four chief pestilences recorded—Origin of the disease—Plague of Athens—Of Constantinople—Of Florence—Of Milan—State of medical knowledge—Plague of London 25

CHAPTER III

Siege of Platea—Numantia—Jyre—Syracuse—Times of Circumvallation—Siege of Jerusalem—Of La Rochelle—Effects of the invention of gunpowder—Siege of Ostend—Magdeburg—Character of the mercenary troops of the seventeenth century—Siege of Saragoza 102

CHAPTER IV

Corcyrean sedition—Civil war of Rome—Jacquerie—Factions of the Circus at Constantinople—Massacre of Sept 2 1792 . . . 184

CHAPTER V

Character of Cleon—Blockade and capture of the Lacedemonians at Pylos—Comparison with the capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon—Greek comedy—Sketch of the Knights of Aristophanes—Subsequent history of Cleon—Account of the Popish Plot—Character and history of Titus Oates—Mutilation of the Hermæ at Athens 230

CHAPTER VI

Athenian expedition against Sicily—Siege of Syracuse—Retreat and destruction of the army—Retreat of Ney in Russia—Retreat of Sir John Hawkwood in Italy 285

Page

CHAPTER VII.

Sketch of the interval which elapsed between the defeat in Sicily, and the battle of Arginusæ—Battle of Arginusæ—Prosecution and death of the Athenian Generals—Massacre of the De Witts—End of the Peloponnesian war 316

CHAPTER VIII.

History and character of Socrates—Account of his death—Prosecution of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague—Attempt to re-establish Prelacy in Scotland—Brown—Guthrie—Reformation in England—Account of Rowland Taylor 333

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page

Head of Thucydides 1
Head of Pericles, from a marble bust in the British Museum . . 25
Medal of Boccacio 26
Medal of Cardinal Charles Borromeo, from a cast in the British Museum 69
Medal struck to commemorate the Plague and Fire of London.
Obverse . . 89
Reverse . . 100
Medal, containing a plan of Ostend 102
Battering Ram, from 'Pompeii' 122
Moveable Towers, from ditto 123
Plan of Zaragoza 169
Hippodrome of Constantinople 221
Medal struck after Sir E. Godfrey's murder 263
Medal of Titus Oates 282
Prow of an ancient vessel found at Genoa. 316
Disposition of Athenian fleet at Arginusæ 320
Medal struck after the massacre of the De Witts. Obverse . . 331
Reverse . . 332
Head of Socrates 338
Head of Plato 363

The medals have been engraved from the originals in the British Museum

HISTORICAL PARALLELS.



Bust of Thucydides.

CHAPTER I.

Prosecution of the Persian war—Rise of Athens to maritime empire, and consequent determining of the aristocratical interest—Administration of Cimon—of Pericles—Education of the Athenians—Commencement of the Peloponnesian war.

No country, looking only to external circumstances, had ever a fairer opportunity of establishing a mighty empire than Greece, after the total overthrow of the Persian invasion. The power of Persia broken,

Egypt in decay, Rome in its infancy, Carthage distant and intent upon western conquests, her own soldiery inspirited by success, and preceded by that opinion of their invincibility which is an almost certain earnest of future victory, there seemed to be no power capable of withstanding Greece had she been zealous and unanimous in prosecuting foreign conquest. But instead of tracing the march of a victorious nation to empire, this volume will describe little but the growth of civil dissensions, bloody enmities, and long and destructive warfare between kindred states. Until the reign of Alexander, the Greeks never possessed a foot of land in Asia or Africa beyond the narrow territories, acquired long before the period of which we treat, of the numerous cities which lined the Mediterranean, and those smaller seas which communicate with it.

The cause of this want of foreign enterprise is to be sought chiefly in the non-existence of any acknowledged head of the nation, and in the selfishness and want of union which, as we have seen, characterized their councils even in the time of danger. Sparta, in right of her preeminent reputation in arms, claimed and was allowed to lead the confederate troops of Greece in the field; but in their councils she had only an equal voice. That reputation, and the lofty, self-denying, though stern and unlovely, temper fostered by the institutions of Lycurgus, had excited so much respect, that at the games of assembled Greece the presence of a Spartan was enough to turn the eyes of the spectators from the competitors to himself: and the command of the fleet collected to oppose Xerxes was vested in a Spartan at the instance of the allies themselves, who, notwithstanding the smallness of the Lacedæmonian naval force, refused to serve under any other than a Spartan commander. But the pride and presumed treason of

Pausanias soon disgusted the allies, and threw the naval command into the hands of the Athenians; and that people soon converted the force meant to prosecute the quarrel with Persia into an instrument of their own aggrandisement, and assumed an authority nothing less than despotic over free states, which had confederated with them as one equal with another. Hence arose two different, and often conflicting interests: the Athenians powerful by sea, the Lacedæmonians by land. Opposed in the nature of their government as in the nature of their strength, they became the rallying points to which two factions, implacable in their enmity, looked for support, and to the care with which they fomented the civil discords on which their power was based, the evils which we are about to describe may in great measure be referred. But the circumstances which led to this rivalry require to be more fully told.

The states which had confederated to repel the invasion of Xerxes did not rest satisfied with self-defence. After the battle of Salamis, the fleet proceeded to liberate the islands of the Ægean sea, and the Grecian cities of Asia Minor; and the forces of those states gladly combined with their deliverers to prosecute the war against their common enemy. In the third year after the battle of Salamis, the haughtiness and misconduct of Pausanias so alienated the allies, that the Peloponnesians returned home, and the Asiatic, Hellespontine, and Island Greeks transferred the right of leading their united forces to the Athenians. Aristides' high character for integrity appears to have been the chief instrument in procuring for his countrymen this great increase of power. By his advice they proceeded to draw out an assessment, in which each state, according to its strength, was rated to furnish a certain number of ships, and a stated sum of money, for the purposes

of the confederacy; and the difficult and invidious task of apportioning the contributions was assigned to him. This he executed with such success that not a complaint of injustice or partiality was heard. The whole assessment amounted to 460 talents, about 101,000 English pounds. At his death, Cimon, hitherto the partner of his influence, succeeded to the sole possession of it. Cimon was one of the most honest of Grecian statesmen; but he was not governed by that scrupulous love of justice which distinguished Aristides. Under his guidance the first steps were taken towards making the contributions of Greece for the maintenance of the Persian war the means of establishing the dominion of Athens over Grecian cities. The allied states by degrees grew weary of exertions to which they were no longer urged by a sense of danger; and when it was proposed that they should commute the personal service of their citizens for a sum of money, the Athenians undertaking to provide and man a fleet for the general purposes of the confederacy, the suggestion was readily adopted by many. "By this means Athens was at once obliged to build and employ more ships, and supplied with the means, while the navy of the allies proportionally declined. The Athenians, feeling their strength, became haughtier in their conduct, and more harsh in enforcing the same services which grew to be less punctually rendered. Hence rose wars with the defaulters, in which, Athens uniformly prevailing, the fleet of the conquered city was taken from it, and a heavier tribute levied: and since every such contest brought fresh power and wealth to the predominant state, and diminished the resources which could be at the command of any combination among its dependants, Athens, from the leader, became the mistress of her allies. The first state so subjected was the island Naxos, which revolted, and was con-

quered in the twelfth year of the Athenian command*." Thus Athens became the best nursery for seamen in Greece, and increased her fleet at the expense of others, who grew weak from the very causes which made her strong. Moreover, having monopolized the naval arm, she was released from all shadow of control from the council of associate states, and was left at full liberty to employ her strength against the Persians, or the pirates, or her own refractory allies, as might best suit the exigencies of the moment. Her power reached its greatest height about the year 450 B. C., when it extended over almost all the islands of the Ægean, including Eubœa, and over the maritime Grecian settlements in Thrace, Macedonia, and Asia Minor. On the continent her influence directed the policy of Megaris, Bœotia, Phocis, and the Opuntian Locris; by the strong towns of Naupactus and Pegæ, she commanded both ends of the Corinthian gulf; Trœzen was subject to her; her influence was predominant in Achaia; and Argos, always jealous of its overbearing neighbour, Lacedæmon, was bound by that jealousy in close alliance with the only countervailing power.

So great a change in the political influence of Athens did not occur without corresponding alterations in the private circumstances and temper of the citizens. Cimon was himself attached to aristocratical principles, and endeavoured to maintain close alliance with Lacedæmon; but still the necessary result of the policy and events which raised Athens to such extensive empire was to diminish the influence of the aristocracy of wealth and birth, and to throw a preponderating influence into the hands of the poorer class of citizens. Such, in Greece, was the invariable effect of cultivating naval power. The military force of every people consisted principally of *hoplitæ*, as

* Library of Useful Knowledge: Greece, p. 46.

they were called—literally, armed men, whose equipment consisted of body armour, greaves, a helmet, a large shield, a long spear, and sword. A body of these troops was always attended by a body of men more lightly armed, and fitter for reconnoitring, for the duty of out-posts, and similar uses; but little to be relied on in the shock of battle, and principally composed of slaves and mercenaries. The heavy foot, on the contrary, in the flourishing times of Greece, were almost universally citizens, and citizens of the richer classes; for the state supplied no armour, and the poorest class could not afford to keep the expensive equipment necessary to pass muster in the ranks. The citizens of Athens were divided into four classes, according to their income. The two wealthiest were obliged to keep a horse, and serve in the cavalry, an expensive service in the barren country of Attica: the third class was obliged to be provided with the full equipment of a heavy-armed soldier: the fourth were allowed to serve in that capacity, if possessed of proper armour; if not, they were enrolled among the light-armed force, or served in the fleet. The poorer class, at Athens as elsewhere, was the most numerous; and it is evident, from what has been said, that its importance would increase or diminish in proportion as the main exertions of the state were made by sea or by land. Where naval power was uncultivated, the power of the sword fell into the hands of the rich: where war and commerce were alike carried on by sea, the lowest class became important by its services, as well as by its numbers. Hence the cultivation of maritime strength was always considered favourable to the cause of democracy.

The total devastation of Attica in the Persian invasion must, of course, have reduced great numbers from competence and comfort to poverty. For some

time the lucrative war carried on against Persia at once filled the treasury, and enabled the state to supply the wants of this class by military pay. A further resource was found in the splendid liberality of Cimon, who, possessed of vast hereditary wealth, had the good fortune to increase it greatly by plunder, and other perquisites of a commander-in-chief, without incurring the charge of dishonesty or rapaciousness. This wealth was freely spent in maintaining his influence. His gardens and orchards were thrown open to the public; a table was daily spread at his house for the free use of the poorer citizens; and he readily lent money to those who required it. Partly at his own, partly at the national expense, many splendid public buildings were erected while he ruled the counsels of the state; and an example was given for the still more splendid subsequent improvements of Pericles. But in spite of his services and his magnificence, Cimon experienced a reverse of favour, to which his professed aristocratical principles, and avowed admiration and attachment to Sparta, contributed in no small degree. In the year 461 B. C. he was banished by ostracism, and a new party came into power, headed by Ephialtes, and Pericles, then a young man just rising into eminence. These men were pledged to hostility to Sparta, and bound to gratify the poorer citizens, by whose favour they had been raised to direct the counsels of the republic.

To preserve that favour it was necessary that the present administration should not be eclipsed by the splendour and beneficence of the preceding one. But the means of the leaders were far inferior; nor, from their private fortunes, could they feed the hungry, and provide splendid places of resort for the tenants of hovels, as their magnificent predecessor had done. The only resource was to bribe the public with its own money; and with this view a law was proposed,

by which the issues from the treasury, which hitherto had been controlled by the court of Areopagus, were placed under the immediate command of the people. The next step was to allow pay for attendance at the general assemblies, and in the courts of justice, in each of which a considerable number of *dicasts** sat, taken indiscriminately from the citizens. This measure was introduced and carried by Pericles, or, according to another statement, there was before a small sum allowed for these services, which was increased by him. The total number of persons who thus derived no small part of their subsistence from the public funds was very considerable; for in one alone of the courts fifty persons was the smallest number that ever sat, and the usual number was from two to five hundred. Sometimes two or more courts were consolidated, and then from one to two thousand persons sat in judgment at once. The effect of this law was twofold: it secured the popularity of those who had procured such a boon for the poor; it secured also a large attendance of the poor in the general assembly, for attendance there secured a sufficient provision for the wants of the day; and as stated assemblies occurred four times in thirty-five days, the payments for these and other extraordinary attendances, with public feasts, and sacrifices, and duty in the courts, formed nearly a subsistence for those who had neither property nor employment.

Not less careful was Pericles to gratify national pride by the splendour of his public improvements. In this respect he far outdid even Cimon, and stamped on Athens that character of magnificence in respect of its public buildings, which has made it the wonder and admiration of strangers even to this day. One of the long walls, the temple of Eleusis, and the

* We cannot with propriety use either of the terms, judges or jurymen: the dicasts were both judge and jury.

Odeon or musical theatre, were erected under his direction; and, above all, the Parthenon was built, and adorned with those celebrated sculptures, part of which, after the lapse of twenty-three centuries, have found a new resting place in our national Museum. The Propylæa, or gateway leading into the Acropolis, was another of his works, "which are the more wonderful because they were completed in so short a time, and have lasted so long; and because, while perfect, each of them was redolent of antiquity in respect of beauty, and yet for grace and vigour it seems to this day as if each of them were newly finished; there resides in them such an ever-springing freshness, which prevents the injuries of time being felt, as if each of the said works were tenanted by an ever youthful spirit, a soul never waxing old, which still retains them in that vigour*."

To meet the expenses of a line of policy such as we have described, the mere revenue of Attica was of course insufficient; but the impost originally contributed by the confederate Greeks towards avenging the aggression of Persia, was rigorously exacted, and applied without scruple to the private purposes of the state and its governors. It was matter of great complaint throughout Greece, that the money raised for the common benefit of the nation should be perverted to the luxury of an overweening and oppressive city; and the political enemies of Pericles made it a constant subject of invective in the public assemblies, that the people of Athens were openly defamed for this act of robbery, and that it was "an overgreat injury to the rest of Greece, and too manifest a token of tyranny, to behold before their eyes how we do employ the money which they were enforced to gather for the maintenance of the wars against the

* Plutarch, Pericles.

barbarian, in gilding, building, and setting forth our city like a glorious woman, all to be gauded with gold and precious stones; and how we do make images and build temples of wonderful and infinite charge. Pericles replied to the contrary, that the Athenians were not bound to make any account of the money unto their friends and allies, considering that they fought for their safety, and that they kept the barbarian far from Greece, without troubling them to set out any one man, horse, or ship of theirs, the money only excepted, which is no more theirs that paid it than theirs that received it, so they bestow it to that use they received it for. And their city being already well furnished with all things necessary for the wars, it was good reason they should bestow the surplus of their treasure in things which, in time to come, would make their fame eternal. Moreover, he said, that whilst they continued building, they should be presently rich, by reason of the diversity of work of all sorts, and other things which they should have need of; and to compass these things better, and to set them in hand, all manner of artificers and workmen that would labour, should be set on work. So should all the citizens and townsmen receive pay and wages of the common treasure, and the city by this means should be greatly beautified, and much more able to maintain itself*."

As a defence the reply is valueless, but it shows how small a portion of reason or justice is sufficient to supply a pretext when backed by power, and points out the certain, and not unmerited, lot of those nations which give the sword out of their own hand, and trust to wealth to purchase defenders. Farther ground for discontent might be found in the increased amount of the tax, which, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, had been raised from four hun-

* Plutarch, North.

dred and sixty talents, the sum levied by Aristides B.C. 477, to about six hundred talents.

To this splendour Pericles seems to have been led alike by policy and taste. The Athenians were naturally a vain people, and their self-complacency was nurtured by the unequalled rapidity with which their fame and power had increased. Every thing which ministered to that fame became precious in their eyes, and a good instance of this is given by Plutarch, if we may trust the accuracy of that gossiping and amusing historian. "Pericles, perceiving that his enemies did still cry out upon him, that he did vainly waste and consume the common treasure, and that he bestowed on the works the whole revenue of the city, one day, when the people were assembled together, he asked before them all whether they thought that the cost bestowed were too much? The people answered him, a great deal too much. Well, then, said he, the charges shall be mine (if you think good) and none of yours; provided that no man's name be written on the works, but mine only. When Pericles had said so, the people cried out aloud, that they would none of that (either that they wondered at the greatness of his mind, or else, for that they would not give him the only honour and praise to have done so sumptuous and stately works), but willed him that he should see them finished at the common charges, without sparing for any cost*." "In his political course," says Professor Heeren, "Pericles was guided by a simple principle, to be the first in his own city, while he secured it the first place among cities." Hence in arts, as well as in arms, he wished it to obtain preeminence; and, instead of following the narrow policy of Sparta, which discouraged in every way the approach of strangers, he endeavoured to make his city the resort and wonder of the world,

* Plut., Pericles, North.

and to adopt every means of turning the wealth of other nations into her treasury; and he was himself singularly qualified to direct the public taste, as well as the public arms, not merely by natural talents, but by a more refined education than, when he was young, generally fell to the lot of a Greek citizen. The celebrated philosopher Anaxagoras was his preceptor in youth; the musician Damon, characterized by Socrates as possessing every quality which could fit a man to take charge of youth, and said to be deeply versed in matters of government, was his friend and associate in riper years; in the company of the celebrated Aspasia, he is said to have found advantages, as well as fascinations, such as no other society in Greece could supply; and his personal accomplishments were set off by a style of oratory which, in polish and eloquence, surpassed all that had yet been heard, and singularly caught the minds of the Athenian people.

In all this there was much to refine and elevate the national taste; there was also much which injured the national character in more vital points, as we may now easily trace in the consequences. Few Athenians had recourse to any species of labour, except military service, to gain a subsistence. Of those who had no means, the number, the just claims, and the expectations, were alike increased by the Persian invasion; and the events which followed it, first a long and profitable war, secondly the consecutive administrations of Cimon and Pericles, who lavished, the one his own, the other the national resources, to keep the poor in good humour, were well calculated to foster their natural dislike to labour, and equally natural desire to enjoy the produce of other men's industry. The result was, that a people jealous to excess of its own supreme authority, and braggart of its own exertions in the cause of freedom, became a

harsh and oppressive ally in name, but sovereign in reality (our language affords no term to express accurately the relation in which the dependent, ὑπήκοος, stood to the leading state), ruthlessly vindictive in punishing every attempt to shake off its yoke. "Had Athens commanded no resources but its own, it would have been impossible to support in idleness so large a portion of the people; but the subject states were liable to unlimited extortion. Any proposed exaction, however oppressive, was eagerly caught at by the swarm of idlers who looked for maintenance and pleasure to the lavish expenditure of the state, and their number and frequent attendance in the assembly would generally ensure the success of any measure which united them in its favour. Hence arose a crew of profligate demagogues, who obtained a paramount influence by being ready to propose, at any cost of justice, humanity, and ultimate advantage, whatever promised to the multitude an immediate gain, and who frequently turned their ascendancy to profit, by taking presents from the allies, as the price of forbearance and protection. The populace drew both gain and pleasure from the submission of the allies; the pride of each was flattered, in proportion to his personal insignificance, by the homage paid him as a citizen of the sovereign republic; their hopes of individual enjoyment were all bound up in the continuance and extension of the empire, and the passions thence resulting were studiously exasperated by unprincipled orators: what wonder, then, that we shall henceforth find their sway as jealous as oppressive; and, in case of revolt, their vengeance as cruel as their rule had been unjust*."

Another cause of the deterioration of the Athenian

* Library of Useful Knowledge: Hist. of Greece, p. 50.

character is to be found in the growth of a new system of education about this period, and the introduction of new accomplishments, new teachers, and new principles. The brief notice of this subject, which we shall introduce, is principally derived from the only English writer who has treated it in a popular manner, and who is well calculated to discuss the question by his intimate acquaintance with Aristophanes and the Socratic writings, though his vehement dislike of all democracies, and especially the Athenian, is such as to make his testimony on some points rather suspicious; we allude to Mr. Mitchell, the translator of Aristophanes. It is to be premised, however, that these are matters on which great difference of opinion exists among scholars; and that many persons among those best qualified to judge take a very different view of the subject from that here given.

Before the age of Pericles, the education of an Athenian of rank and wealth consisted in obtaining, through the instructions of the grammarians, an intimate acquaintance with the writings of the older poets, especially Homer; after which he passed into the hands of the music-master, and the keeper of the gymnasium, or school of bodily exercises. The two latter were the most important branches of education, not so much for purposes of display, as for the effect which they were held to possess in the formation of character. To those whose curiosity prompted some research into the secrets of nature, the schools of the philosophers offered abundant gratification. There they might hear treated the most abstruse topics of physical and metaphysical science; the nature of God, the nature and origin of the universe and its most striking phenomena, the nature of man, were all discussed with a zealous interest and attention on

the part of the pupils, which appears to have led them into no small extravagances*. But some years previous to the Peloponnesian war, as the cause of democracy gained ground, and the minds of all men were fired by the examples of Themistocles, who had risen from the people, or Pericles, who had risen on the people, to fame and power, a species of knowledge more suited to practical purposes was eagerly sought after, and a class of teachers soon rose up to supply the want. These persons, the most distinguished of them not natives of Athens, were called sophists, and they boldly undertook to supply all deficiencies, and qualify their pupils for any station whatever, which they might be called on to fill, or for any pursuit, by which they hoped to rise to eminence. They professed to have acquired, and to be able to teach, all knowledge; and one of them, by way of advertising his own merits, appeared at the Olympic games with a stock of literary samples of various sorts, tragedy, epics, &c.; and further, with the announcement that every article of use or ornament about his person was the work of his own hands. This folly, if it were all, might excite a smile; but these men laid claim to a more mischievous power, that of being able to confound truth and falsehood, and to show how either of two contradictory propositions might be proved with equal certitude and success, according to the interest or inclination of the disputant. Under a democracy, eloquence was the readiest path to power; and eloquence, they taught, was of all acquisitions the most important; that eloquence, and skill in word-splitting, by which, as Plato has farcically described it in the Euthydemus, it could be shown that a man could speak and be silent at the same time; that it was equally easy to a professor

* See the Preliminary Discourse to Mitchell's Aristophanes, note, p. liv. xv.

of this art to prove that a man knew or did not know the same thing, or that he both knew it and did not know it at the same time; and by which the sophists, in the above-named dialogue, prove to the satisfaction of their fellow-disputant, "that he had a father—that he had no father—that a dog was his father—that his father was every body's father—that his mother had a family equally numerous, in which horses, pigs, and crab-fish were all common brethren, with the same rights and ties of consanguinity and affection*." This was the eloquence by which, according to the grave professions of Protagoras, the founder of the school, the worse might be made to appear the better cause, and right and wrong confounded; so that alike in the agora, in the courts of justice, or in social converse, no standard of right or wrong could be set up, except that which the convenience of the speaker should dictate. "As the first step towards this important acquisition, the pupil was carefully initiated in all the niceties of that language, whose mazes and subtleties sometimes led from premises apparently simple to conclusions which looked more like legerdemain than the effects of sober reasoning. He was then told that there were two sorts of persuasion; that by the one an auditor's mind was imbued with actual knowledge, by the other with a knowledge consisting only in belief and opinion; and when he was asked which of these two persuasions rhetoric was meant to create in the courts of law and the public assemblies, he was answered, belief of knowledge without actuality; for rhetoric was defined to be the art of enabling an ignorant man to speak among the ignorant, with more appearance of knowledge than the man who was actually master of the subject under discussion†." Having imparted this valuable faculty to the pupil, the next step was to

* Mitchell, p. lviii. † Ib. p. lxxv.

teach him to use it fearlessly, undeterred by any visionary considerations of right or wrong, of justice or injustice. With this view it was asserted, "that might makes right; that the property of the weak belongs to the strong; and that, whatever the law might say to the contrary, the voice of nature taught and justified the doctrine. They proclaimed that the only wise persons were those who aspired to the direction of public affairs, and who were stopped in this attempt by no other consideration than the measure of their capacity; and they added that those who, without any command over themselves, could acquire a command over others, had a right to have their superior talent rewarded by possessing more than others. For temperance, self-restraint, and a dominion over the passions and desires, were set down by them as marks of dulness and stupidity, only calculated to excite derision. They asserted, with confidence, that nature itself made it both just and honourable, that he who wished to live happily, ought to permit his desires as large a sway as possible, and in no way to restrain them: they bargained indeed for the possession of courage and political wisdom in their scholars; but once in possession of these, a man, in their opinion, was at liberty to administer to his passions in all other respects, and to leave nothing unindulged which could contribute to their gratification. They declared that those who attached disgrace to this doctrine, did it only from a sense of shame at wanting the means to gratify their own passions; and their praises of moderation they asserted to be mere hypocrisy, and to proceed solely from the wish of enslaving better men than themselves. With the same power of self-indulgence, they maintained, these assertors of moderation would pursue the same path as those who were now the objects of their animadversions; they concluded therefore that it was ridiculous in those who

were above restraint to lay a restraint upon themselves, and they proclaimed, in the most unqualified terms, that luxury, licentiousness, and intemperance were alone virtue and happiness, and that all other declarations were mere specious pretences, compacts contrary to nature, the triflings of men who deserved no manner of consideration.

"The sacred principles of justice were treated with a contempt equally daring. They often began with the bold definition that justice itself was nothing but the interest of the strongest; that the masterpiece of injustice was to appear a man of virtue without being really one; and they proceeded to prove (and in a town like Athens the demonstration perhaps was not difficult), that, on all occasions, the just man came off worse than the unjust. In the mutual compacts of private life, they said, the just man is always a loser, and the unjust a gainer. In public affairs, when a contribution is to be made, the one with equal property always contributes less than the other; whereas, when a disbursement is to be made, the former receives nothing, and the latter is a considerable gainer. If both are in office, one mischief at least happens to the just man; his private affairs go to ruin from being neglected, and the public give him no redress, merely because he is a just man; he becomes odious besides to his relations and friends, because he will not, for their service, overstep the bounds of right; whereas, to the unjust man the very reverse, said they, is the case. To paint this more forcibly, they drew the picture of a tyranny, where the unjust man was in the highest state of felicity, the voluntarily just in the lowest state of depression; and they proved that the former, though outraging every rule of humanity, was loaded with praises, not only those who were conscious of his crimes, but even those who had suffered by them, considering him as a happy man; for if injustice,

added they, is ever blamed, the blame proceeds, not from the fear of committing it, but from the fear of suffering by it. Improving upon this notion, they declared that to be able to commit an injury was in itself a blessing, to receive an injury was in itself an evil; but that there was more of ill in receiving, than there was of good in committing, and that to set this right was the origin and object of legislation. Justice therefore they considered as the medium between the greatest of blessings, that of committing wrong with impunity, and the greatest evil, which consists in not being able to revenge an injury received; and hence, according to them, was derived the common attachment to justice, not as being a blessing in itself, but because persons being in a capacity to hurt others, oblige them to consider it as such; for he, they continued, who has power in his hands, and is really a man, would never submit to such a convention: it would indeed be complete folly to do so. Give the good man and the bad man, they triumphantly concluded, power to act as they pleased; present them with rings like that of Gyges, which should make them invisible, and what will be the consequence? The virtuous man would soon be found treading the very same path as the villain, and if he should be so 'adamantine' as to act otherwise, he would be considered as the most pitiful and stupid of his species. In public indeed every one would eulogise his virtues; but this would be done with a design of deceiving others, and in the fear of risking fortune, if a contrary course were pursued *."

The character and doctrines of the sophists have been made known to us chiefly by the writings of an inveterate enemy, and it is expedient therefore to collect any testimony which may confirm the picture, such as it is given by Plato. Such corroboration

* Mitchell, p. lxxvii. lxxxi.

will be found in the unexceptionable testimony of the contemporary historian. His description of the state of morals in Athens at the time of the plague, is sufficient proof that some powerful influence had been at work to root out every principle of justice and morality; and we may trace in it the natural consequences of the sophistical tenets, as they are delivered by Socrates, through the medium of Plato. We shall hereafter have occasion to quote this celebrated passage, and can therefore do no more here than refer to it.

The new-formed empire of Athens had lasted some forty years, and had allowed time for those changes, which we have endeavoured to describe, to exert their seductive influence on the national character, when circumstances, which it is not necessary here to relate, led to a quarrel between the Athenians and Corinthians, the latter being a principal member of that confederacy consisting chiefly of Peloponnesian states, of which Sparta was the head. At their instance a congress of the confederates was held at Sparta, in which they complained loudly of their injuries, and reproved the sluggishness of the Spartan councils, which had suffered so many Grecian cities to be deprived of independence. Finally it was resolved that the treaties then existing between Sparta and her allies, and the Athenians, were broken, and that a subsequent meeting should be held, to consider the expediency of declaring war. This took place in the autumn of the year 432 B. C.

War, however, was not immediately declared. Several embassies passed between Sparta and Athens, partly for the sake of procrastinating a contest for which neither party felt quite ready, partly to produce discord and embarrass the Athenian government. One of these was commissioned to require that due atonement should be made for the murder of Cylon, of which we have fully spoken in p. 165,

vol. i., to avert the anger of the gods from Greece. The Lacedæmonians required that all persons descended from the guilty family should be banished, in the number of whom Pericles was included by his maternal descent, not from any hope of obtaining his banishment, but with the view of throwing on him the odium of involving the city in war on his own account. He eluded the difficulty by reminding them of a similar instance of impiety committed by the Spartan government, which had never been atoned for, and bidding them first make due expiation for that. A second, and a third embassy were sent, without producing any hopes of a reconciliation; and when the people were convoked to consider of the last of these, Pericles addressed the assembly in a speech urging it decidedly to reject the haughty demands of the Peloponnesians, which were merely the forerunners of more extensive requisitions. He proceeded to encourage them by contrasting their own wealth with the scanty revenue of the Peloponnesians; a poverty which prevented the latter from engaging in long and distant wars, and which had kept them unacquainted with maritime affairs. He admitted that in one battle they might be victorious over all the rest of Greece; but asserted that they would neither expect, nor be able to support, a long and expensive war. He explained the manner in which he proposed to conduct the contest which he advised, abandoning Attica to the ravage of the enemy, and taking ample satisfaction by a series of predatory excursions round the coast of Peloponnesus. "It is a very different matter," he continued, "that the whole of Attica, or that a small part even of Peloponnesus, should be laid waste. For our antagonists can find no other territory except by fighting for it, whereas for us there is abundance, both on the continent and in islands: for the dominion of the sea is a mighty thing; and consider, if we were islanders, who

would be so secure from attack as ourselves? Now then we should aim at placing ourselves as nearly in that situation as possible, caring not for houses and lands, but looking to the safety of our city and the sovereignty of the sea, and taking care not to be led by passion to give battle to the Peloponnesians, who are much our superiors in number. For if we beat them, they will fight again in equal force; but if we are beaten, we lose our allies, wherein lies our strength. Let our lament be for men's bodies, not for houses and lands, for these do not get men, but men get them*."

The Athenians approved of what Pericles had said, and answered, that they would do nothing upon compulsion; but were willing to submit any disputes to arbitration, according to the terms of existing treaties. And the Lacedæmonians departed home, and sent no more embassies.

This was the origin of that long and injurious struggle to Greece, commonly called the Peloponnesian war, in the illustration of which this volume will be chiefly employed. It has obtained a celebrity greater than even its own intrinsic importance might have gained for it, in consequence of having been narrated by a contemporary historian, to whose accuracy, impartiality, and profound knowledge, generation after generation have borne one never varying testimony; and who has well fulfilled the lofty task which he proposed to himself, of leaving, as his memorial, no collection of idle stories, written to gain the favour of the moment; but an everlasting record of those things which have been, and which will again, according to the nature of man, recur in something of a similar form†.

Hostilities commenced in the year B.C. 431. The Lacedæmonian league comprised all the states of Peloponnesus, except Argos and Achaia, which were neutral; and nearly all northern Greece, except

* Thucyd. i. 143. † Ib. i. 22.

Thessaly and Acarnania, which sided with Athens. The Athenian confederacy contained, besides those two states, Corcyra, Zacynthus, and the newly established city of Naupactus, held by the Messenians who had revolted from Sparta. Chios and Lesbos furnished ships of war, and were treated as allies; the other islands of the Ægean, except Melos and Thera, together with the Greek cities on the coast of Asia and of Thrace, except a few which had revolted, were tributary subjects, deprived of their ships of war, and subject to the uncontrolled will of the Athenian people. Of the means of Athens at this time, we have a tolerably minute account given by Thucydides. The annual revenue paid by the allies has been stated at about six hundred talents, besides other sources, such as port dues and taxes. It is much to the credit of Pericles' administration, that, notwithstanding his lavish expenditure, there was in the treasury at this time six thousand talents of coined money, besides a quantity of uncoined gold and silver, in public and private dedications, vessels of sacrifice and divine service, and Persian spoils, amounting to five hundred talents more. There was also much valuable property in the temples, which they might use if necessary, and especially the golden ornaments and drapery of the statue of Minerva in the Parthenon, made of the purest metal, and forty talents in weight, which could be taken off without injury to the statue, and replaced when circumstances should admit of it. The military force of the state amounted to 13,000 heavy armed foot, fit for foreign service; 16,000 of the same class, comprising the old and young, and foreigners resident in Athens, who were exempt from foreign service, but liable to be called upon for home duty; 1,200 cavalry; 1,600 archers; and 300 triremes fit to put to sea. Reckoning the crew of a trireme at 200 men, the crews of 130, which number put to sea at once

in the first year of the war, would amount to 26,000 men.

In accordance with the policy recommended by Pericles, and at his suggestion, the Athenians abandoned the whole of Attica to the ravages of the enemy. They removed into the city their families and household furniture, even to the wooden framework of their houses; their live stock was transported to Eubœa, and the neighbouring islands. "Very grievous was this removal to them, because they had always been used, the greater part of them, to reside in the country*." This preference of a country life the historian traces to the earliest times; the result no doubt of that superior security of life and property, which induced the Athenians, at an earlier period than other Greeks, to desist from wearing arms as part of their usual dress. It was the more grievous, he adds, because after the Median war, in which all Attica was laid waste with fire and sword, their establishments had been newly restored; and, we may conjecture, with new comforts and elegances. Nor was the inconvenience confined to quitting the homes to which they had been long attached. The introduction of such a multitude within the walls of a single city led, of course, to serious inconvenience. Some few had town houses, or found a home with friends and relations; others set up the framework of their houses, or constructed habitations as they could in the unoccupied spaces within the walls; and the poorest sheltered themselves in the towers of the walls, or in the temples, or wherever a place of refuge could be found. Even that space of ground which was called the Pelasgian†, of which an oracle had declared that it was "better uninhabited," was not kept unoccupied by the superstition; "and the oracle," says Thucydides, "seems to me to have turned out contrary

* Thucyd. ii. 14.

† See Dr. Arnold's note, Thucyd. ii. 17.

to what was supposed, for the threatened evil came not by reason of the forbidden indwelling, but the necessity of the indwelling came through the war*." Those evils, of which we have before spoken, arising from a large, indigent, and idle population, with little employment, except in state affairs, and little subsistence, except from the public treasury, must of course have been greatly increased by such an addition to the inhabitants of the city.

* Thucyd. ii. 17.



Pericles. From a marble bust in the British Museum.



Medal of Boccaccio.

CHAPTER II.

Historians of the plague—Sketch of the four chief pestilences recorded—Origin of the disease—Plague of Athens—Of Constantinople—Of Florence—Of Milan—State of medical knowledge—Plague of London.

A HISTORY of the plague, in the hands of one qualified to do justice to the subject by medical knowledge joined to extensive research, might be rendered attractive in no common degree. It has chanced that the phenomena, moral and physical, of several remarkable pestilences have been described by writers of unusual power, whose eloquence has communicated to them a literary interest, independent of that which they must otherwise have possessed as striking passages in the history of man. Of these Thucydides is the earliest; and the plague which desolated Athens in the second year of the Peloponnesian war, though not the earliest mentioned in profane records, is the first of which any particular account

has reached us. A sufferer as well as a spectator, he has related its symptoms, described the wretchedness which it inflicted on his country, and analyzed its moral effects with the accuracy and profoundness of reflection by which he is distinguished above all other historians; and no part of that work which he has delivered to us as an "everlasting possession*" has excited more admiration than this. Hippocrates, himself a contemporary, if not an eye-witness, has left a medical account of the same disease, and from these authorities Lucretius has composed one of the finest and most celebrated passages in his philosophical poem†. Procopius also has left a description of the plague‡, which during the reign of Justinian ravaged nearly all the known world, evidently modelled upon Thucydides, and not an unsuccessful imitation of him. In later times the great plagues of Florence and London have found worthy chroniclers in the two great novelists, Boccacio, who was an eye-witness of that which he describes, and Defoe, the verisimilitude of whose narration is such, that it is difficult to believe it any thing but what it proposes to be, the narrative of a person who had witnessed the eventful time of which he wrote. Defoe, however, was under three years old when the great plague of London broke out. Boccacio appears like Procopius to have written in imitation, perhaps in emulation of the Greek historian: Defoe has treated the subject in his peculiar style, and at much greater length than any of those whom we have named; and intermixing, as we must believe, a quantity of facts and observations, the result of minute inquiry, with a framework of fiction, has produced a narrative stamped, like all his works, with a singular appearance of reality, and remarkable for simple pathos and homely vigour of description.

* κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί, i. 22.

† Lib. vi. ‡ Persic. lib. ii.

We may divide pestilences into two classes: those which, as if dependent upon some noxious property of the air, have spread successively from country to country and devastated a large portion of the world, and those which have raged in a particular spot or within small limits, and which appear therefore to have been generated by some local accident, as is said to have occurred in Africa, B. C. 126 (A. U. 628), by the fetid exhalations from dead locusts*, or to have been introduced from other places, and to have been propagated rather by infection than the transmissive qualities of the air. To ascertain the specific difference between the two is probably beyond the reach of medical science; but the distinction is important, since the latter are susceptible of control by quarantine laws, which are powerless, perhaps worse than powerless, to arrest the former. Of these the most celebrated are quaintly described in a manuscript account of the great plague of London, preserved in the British Museum†.

"Of universall, or œcumenicall‡ plauges, the most spreading and destructive that I have met with in history are these four: ffirst that of Athens, which fell out in the Peloponnesian warr, before Christ 428, described most fully by that eminent historian, Thucydides, in his second booke, who had been sicke of it himselfe, but restored, and from him by that

* Kircher, Scrutinium de Peste. He quotes Diodorus (without reference) and Orosius, book v., as his authorities: the passage in Diodorus we have not been able to find.

† "Λοιμογραφία, or an experimental relation of what hath happened remarkqueable in the last Plague in the city of London, &c. by W. Boghurst, apothecary in St. Giles' in ye Feilds: London, 1666, MS. Sloane, 349." Our attention was directed to this book as being likely to contain some curious details of the plague of 1665, but with the exception of this prefatory matter it is too exclusively medical to suit our purpose.

‡ "Oecumenical (οἰκουμενικὸς from οἰκουμένη), relating to the whole habitable world."—*Johnson.*

great promoter and enlightener of the Epicurean, or Corpuscular Philosophy, the poet Lucretius, in the last part of his last booke. This plauge, though it bee vulgarly called the Athenian plauge, because it did great execution there in that city, yet indeed not on Athens alone, but as Thucydides tells us, beginning at Æthiopia overran Afrika and transferred itself into Asia, and thence into Europe.

"The second famous, or œcumenicall plauge which hath occurred to my reading, was in the raigne of Vibius Gallus, and Volusianus his sonne, according to Calvisius, of Christ 253. This plauge is also related to have had its originall in Æthiopia, and from thense to have diffused itself into all the provinces of the Roman empire, and to have lasted fifteen yeares without intermission. How it raged in Alexandria and Ægypt wee understand from an epistle of Dionysius, the bishop of that city at that time, recorded by Eusebius in his viith book, cap. 22. Hee tells us it fell promiscuously on the heathens and the christians, though most heavily upon the former, that noe house was free from the dire effects of its rage. From other parts of Affrique wee understand from St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, in his excellent sermon *de Mortalitate*, made on purpose to animate and strengthen the christians, who were joynt and fellow sufferers with the heathens, *unde præsentis mortalitatis copia*, as he tearms it—'the large measure of the present mortality:' and of its rage at Rome wee find observed out of the Roman history by Calvisius that there dyed of it daily to the number of 5000, and therefore Brightman and Mead, both men sufficiently learned, in their comentaryes upon the Revelations, interpret this plauge to be one of the fearful judgments foretold to breake forth upon the opening of the fourth seale, chap. vi. 8. And Justus Lipsius, a critick of noe ordinary read-

ing, saith of this pestilence in his book *de Constantia, lib.* 2, '*non alia unquam major lues, &c.*' that his reading did not afford him an example or president of a greater plauge, considering the many countreys it infected in the severall yeares that it lasted.

" The third universall plauge was that which happened in the raigne of Justinian, and took its beginning in the yeare of Christ 532, and this also, as the former, is sayd to have descended from Æthiopia. Wee have a copious description of it by Procopius in his *Persicorum, lib.* 2. And we are informed by him that it raged very much in Byzantium, or Constantinople, for four months space, and that when it was in its height, there dyed of it every day 10,000 and upwards; and this is the pestilence related by Evagrius the ecclesiasticall historian, which lasted, as he says, fifty-two yeares, not continuall, but by severall returns and revolutions, and of this pestilence he was sick himselfe. And Greece shared not only in the contagion of it, but also Italy, as wee read in Paulus Diaconus, and it swept away Pope Pelagius, the predecessor of Gregory the Great, about the year 580; ffor I conceive this plauge to be that in the raigne of Justinian, propagated into remoter countreys, and lengthened out to this tearme, much according to the forementioned computation of Evagrius. It also overran Fraunce in the year 583, and this I conceive to be that which plauged the Britons here in that vacation betwixt the Romans government and the Saxons, in Vortigern's tyme, when the living could scarce bury the dead.

" The fourth œcumenicall plauge which I have taken notice of, was in the year 1347, '*quæ violentissima fuit, et totum mundum pervasit in annis sex et ita vastavit ut nec tertia pars hominum supercsset:*' they are the words of Calvisius, 'it was most violent and ran over the world in six years, and soe wasted

Europe that not the third part of men were left alive.' To omit other parts, and see what it did at home in our owne countreye, Mr. Cambden reports in his Britannia, that in the yeare 1348 this plauge was soe hot that in Wallingford, in Barkshire, it vnlyspeopled the town, reducing their twelve churches to one or two, which they now retayne. In London it had soe quick an edge, that in the space of twelve months there was buried in one church-yard, commonly called the Cistercian, or Charter-house, above 50,000. They write further that through the kingdom it made such havock that it tooke away more than half the people; and it is noted there dyed in London alone, between the 1st of January and the 1st of July, 57,374. Soe Daniel, in 22, Edward III."

It may be worthy of remark that of these plagues three are traced to Egypt or Ethiopia, while the fourth, as we shall presently see from Villani, is said to have originated in the north-east of Asia. Kircher, in his 'Scrutinium de Peste,' has given a catalogue of the most remarkable pestilences recorded, in which he mentions only one other universal plague, in the year 1400, but relates neither its origin nor its history. Another very destructive one broke out in the year 170 in Babylonia, which spread through the provinces, and carried off a vast number of persons at Rome. Galen was then living in the capital, and speaks of this disease as very similar to that described by Thucydides.

The present chapter will be employed in describing some of those pestilences which are most celebrated, either for the abilities exerted in describing them, or the ravages which they have committed; and will include the plagues of Athens, Constantinople, Florence, the plague of Milan in 1630, and of London in 1665. It is not our plan to give either a general history of the plague, or a detailed account of the rise and fall, the symptoms and method of treatment of

each particular scourge. The passages which we extract from Thucydides, Procopius, and Boccacio, are complete in themselves; from those later pestilences, of which no master mind has given a comprehensive view, we have endeavoured to select such particulars, and to quote such passages as show the moral consequences of the visitation, rather than to disgust by an often repeated story of suffering, or give a hospital chronicle of the varying intensity of the mischief from day to day.

We begin then with Thucydides' account of the plague at Athens in the second year of the war.

"In the very beginning of summer, the Peloponnesians and their confederates, as before, two-thirds of the military power of each state, invaded Attica, under the command of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus, king of Lacedæmon, and after they had encamped themselves wasted the country about them. And before they had been many days in Attica the plague first began among the Athenians, said also to have seized formerly on divers other parts, as about Lemnos and elsewhere, but so great a plague and mortality of men was never remembered to have happened in any place before. For at first, neither were the physicians able to cure it through ignorance of what it was, but died fastest themselves, as being the men that most approached the sick, nor any other art of man availed whatsoever. All supplications of the gods, and inquiries of oracles, and whatsoever other means they used of that kind, proved all unprofitable, and at the last, subdued by the greatness of the evil, they gave them all over."

"It began (by report) first, in that part of Æthiopia that lieth above Ægypt, and thence fell down into Ægypt, and Afric, and into the greatest part of the territories of the king*. It invaded Athens on a sudden, and touched first upon those that dwelt in

* Of Persia.

Piræus; insomuch as they reported the Peloponnesians had cast poison into their tanks, for springs there were not any in that place. But afterwards it reached the upper city, and then they died a great deal faster. Now let every man, physician or other, concerning the ground of this sickness, whence it sprung, and what causes he thinks able to produce so great an alteration, speak according to his own knowledge; for my own part, I will deliver but the manner of it, and lay open only such things as one may take his mark by, to discover the same if it come again, having been both sick of it myself, and seen others sick of the same.

"This year, by confession of all men, was of all other for other diseases most free and healthful. But if any man were sick before, his disease turned to this; if not, yet suddenly, without any apparent cause preceding, and being in perfect health, they were taken first with an extreme ache in their heads, redness and inflammation of the eyes; and then inwardly their throats and tongues grew presently bloody, and sent out a preternatural and fetid breath. Upon this followed sneezing and hoarseness, and not long after the pain together with a mighty cough came down into the breast: and when once it was settled in the stomach it caused vomit, and with great torment came on all manner of evacuations of bile that physicians ever named. And most persons were taken with a hollow hiccough, bringing on violent convulsions, which in some ceased quickly, but in others were long before they gave over. Their bodies outwardly to the touch were neither very hot nor pale, but reddish, livid, and beflowered with little pimples and whelks; but so burned inwardly, as not to endure the lightest cloths or linen garment to be upon them, nor any thing but mere nakedness; but rather most willingly to have cast themselves into cold water. And many of them that were not looked to,

possessed with insatiate thirst, did this into the tanks. And whether they drank more or less, it was all one; and restlessness and wakefulness prevailed throughout. And while the disease was at the height, their bodies wasted not, but resisted the torment beyond all expectation, so that most of them died on the ninth, or seventh day, of the inward fever, whilst they had yet strength, or if they had escaped that, then the disease falling down into their bellies, and causing there great exulcerations and immoderate looseness, they died many of them afterwards through weakness. For the disease (which took first the head) began above and came down, and passed through the whole body; and if a man survived through the worst part of it, still it caught hold of his extremities, and left its mark. For it fell upon the fingers and toes; and many survived with the loss of these members; some also with the loss of their eyes. And others presently upon their recovery, were taken with such an oblivion of all things whatsoever, as they neither knew themselves, nor their acquaintance.

"For this was a kind of sickness which far surmounted all expression of words, and both exceeded human nature in the cruelty wherewith it handled each one, and appeared also otherwise to be none of those diseases that are bred amongst us, and that especially by this. For all, both birds and beasts, that use to feed on human flesh, though many men lay abroad unburied, either came not at them, or tasting perished. And the proof is this: there ensued a total failure of all such fowl, which were not then seen, neither about the carcasses, or any where else: but by the dogs, because they are familiar with men, this effect was seen much clearer.

"So that this disease (to pass over many strange particulars of the accidents that some had differently from others) was in general such as I have shown, and for other usual sicknesses, at that time no man

was troubled with any, or if there were any they turned to this. Now they died, some for want of attendance, and some again with all the care and physic that could be used. Nor was there any to say certain medicine, that applied must have helped them; for if it did good to one, it did harm to another; and as far as strength and weakness of constitution were concerned, it carried off all alike, even those that were most carefully nursed. But the greatest misery of all was, the dejection of mind, in such as found themselves beginning to be sick (for they grew presently desperate, and gave themselves over without making any resistance), as also their dying thus like sheep, infected by mutual visitation; for the greatest mortality proceeded that way. For if men forbore through fear to visit them, then they died forlorn; whereby many houses were emptied, for want of some one that would tend the inhabitants. If they forbore not, then they died themselves, and principally the honestest men. For out of shame they would not spare themselves, but went in unto their friends, especially after it was come to this pass, that even their domestics, wearied with the lamentations of them that died, and overcome with the greatness of the calamity, were no longer moved therewith. Still those who had recovered felt the most compassion both on them that died and on them that lay sick, as having both known the misery themselves, and now no more subject to the danger. For this disease never took any man the second time, so as to be mortal. And these men were both by others counted happy, and they also themselves, through excess of present joy, conceived a kind of light hope never to die of any other sickness hereafter.

"Besides the present affliction, the reception of the country people and of their substance into the city, oppressed both them, and much more the people themselves that so came in. For having no houses,

but dwelling at that time of the year in stifling booths, the mortality was now without all form; and dying men lay tumbling one upon another in the streets, and men half dead about every conduit through desire of water. The temples also where they took up their temporary abode, were all full of the dead that died within them; for, oppressed with violence of the calamity, and not knowing what to do, men grew careless both of holy and profane things alike. And the laws which they formerly used touching funerals were all now broken; every one burying where he could find room. And many for want of things necessary, after so many deaths before, had recourse to shameless burials of their dead. For when one had made a funeral pile *, another getting before him, would throw on his dead and set fire to it. And when one was burning, another would come, and having cast thereon him whom he carried, go his way again.

"And the great licentiousness, which also in other kinds was used in the city, began at first from this disease. For men more readily ventured on things which they formerly concealed, or durst not do freely and at their pleasure, seeing before their eyes such quick revolution, of the rich dying, and men worth nothing inheriting their estates; insomuch as they judged it best to enjoy their fortunes briskly and merrily, considering them and their lives alike held but from day to day. As for pains, no man was forward in any action of honour to take any, because they thought it uncertain whether they should die or not, before they achieved it. But that which produced present enjoyment, or which immediately led to it, was now received to be both honourable and advantageous. Neither the fear of the gods, nor laws of

* A pile of wood, which when they laid the corpse on it, they fired, and afterwards buried the bones.

men, awed any man. Not the former, because they concluded it was alike to worship or not worship, from seeing that alike they all perished: nor the latter, because no man expected his life would last, till he received punishment of his crimes by judgment. But they thought there was now over their heads some far greater judgment decreed against them; before which fell they thought to enjoy some little part of their lives.

"Such was the misery into which the Athenians being fallen, were much oppressed; having not only their men killed by the disease within, but the enemy also laying waste their fields and villages without. In this sickness also (as it was not unlikely they would) they called to mind this verse, said also of the elder sort to have been uttered of old;—

A Doric war shall fall,
And a great plague withal.

"Now were men at variance about the word, some saying it was not Λοιμὸς (i. e. the Plague), that was by the ancients mentioned in that verse, but Λιμὸς (i. e. Famine). But upon the present occasion the word Λοιμὸς deservedly obtained. For as men suffered, so they made the verse to say. And I think, if after this there shall ever come another Doric war, and with it a famine, they are like to recite the verse accordingly. There was also reported by such as knew, a certain answer given by the oracle to the Lacedæmonians, when they inquired whether they should make this war or not, 'that if they warred with all their power, they should have the victory, and that the god* himself would take their parts;' and thereupon they thought the present misery to be a fulfilling of that prophecy. The Peloponnesians

* Apollo, to whom the heathens attributed the immission of all epidemic or ordinary diseases.

were no sooner entered Attica, but the sickness presently began, and never came into Peloponnesus, to speak of, but reigned principally in Athens, and in such other places afterwards as were most populous. And thus much of this disease *."

The disease remitted during the winter, but in the following summer broke out again, and carried off Pericles among its victims. In that one death Athens received more irretrievable injury than from the loss of all the multitude who perished, for he was the last of that succession of statesmen who founded and matured her greatness. Hitherto the directors, the virtual sovereigns of the state †, had been truly demagogues: they led, those who succeeded to their influence were led by, the people, and preserved their power by yielding to and encouraging passions which they ought to have controlled ‡. Two years later the plague broke out again. Altogether it carried off 4400 heavy armed soldiers, and 300 horsemen; that is, 4700 male citizens in the prime of life, between the ages fixed by law as the limits of active service, of the highest and middle ranks alone, besides an innumerable multitude of other persons §.

Aristophanes and Plato furnish abundant evidence, if farther evidence were necessary, that about this time a great change did take place in the manners

* Thucyd. ii. 47, 54. Hobbes's Translation has been used throughout the volume; it has been compared with the original, and corrected where necessary.

† It was in name a state democratical, but in fact a government of the principal man.—Thucyd. ii. 65.

‡ See the analysis of the Knights, in chap. iv.

§ See Thucyd. iii. 87. The Athenian army at the commencement of the war consisted of 13,000 heavy armed soldiers of the former class, and 1200 horsemen, including the horse archers, who were not citizens. Such being the mortality of the upper classes, we may safely suppose that a quarter of the whole population perished.—Thucyd. ii. 13.

and morals of the Athenians. The reader will find this subject, which is one of great interest, and would require a separate chapter for its investigation, noticed in our introductory chapter, and treated at considerable length in the preliminary discourse to Mitchell's Aristophanes there quoted. We here allude to it only to guard against the supposition that this total demoralization was brought about in the short space of a few months by the influence of terror and recklessness: a thing not in itself probable, not confirmed by the experience of similar visitations, and not the necessary meaning of the assertion, that "the licentiousness of the city flowed at first from this disease." This was the crisis of the change; the pestilence determined the victory of an evil influence which had long been spreading, and marked the period from which that change was to be dated. Hitherto the open practice of the new doctrines had been repressed by laws, and by the received opinion of good and evil; but now that the insecurity of life and property banished thought of the future, by alike extinguishing both hope and fear, "for no man expected that his life would last till he received punishment of his crimes by judgment," and that the general disorder and distress removed all check of public opinion, the doctrines of the sophists sprung at once to maturity, and bore abundant fruit after their kind *.

Another circumstance, apparently more trivial, is not unlikely to have had considerable effect—the collection of the whole Athenian people within the walls. A proverb tells us that idleness is the mother of all vice; and few things are more unfavourable to moral habits than the crowding of a large population

* See Mitchell's Preliminary Discourse, p. 74, 84, and the Platonic dialogues there quoted. See also the Clouds, especially the concluding part, and the dialogue between the Logos Dikaios and Logos Adikos.

within inconveniently narrow bounds. Both these sources of evil were united in Athens. The inconvenience experienced by the people for want of accommodation has been already described. For their employments, agriculture was the only business to which a free Athenian would *personally* apply himself, although the wealthy carried on manufactures by means of slaves; and from the practice of agriculture the Athenians were now entirely cut off. In consequence a great number of families had no support whatever, except what they derived from the public revenue, in the form of sacrifices, a large part of which was distributed among the people, public entertainments, and the pay for attending the public meetings and the courts of justice. Needy men readily embrace doctrines which place the property of others at their disposal; and thus the nation was already half demoralized, when the plague broke out, and removed the fear of present punishment, without enforcing that of future retribution. Temptation and bad example soon completed the work.

Procopius, a Greek historian of the sixth century, was a witness, and has left a minute description of the great plague, which in the reign of Justinian ravaged nearly the whole of the known world. It is evidently modelled upon the celebrated passage in Thucydides which we have just extracted. The most remarkable circumstance in this pestilence is its extraordinary length. When Evagrius of Antioch wrote his Ecclesiastical History it had lasted fifty-two years, with alternate fits of relaxation and vigour; but during this long period the earth was never wholly free from its ravages.

"About this time a pestilence occurred, which almost put an end to the human race. Now it is always probable that daring men will propose some reason to explain those things which come down on

us direct from heaven, as persons skilled in such matters love to deal in wonderful causes beyond man's discovery, and to shape strange schemes of natural philosophy; knowing that what they utter is not sound, but satisfied if they can cheat the vulgar into believing it. But for this particular calamity we can in no way account, either in word or thought, except by referring it to God. For it fell on no particular portion of the earth, nor race of men, nor was it confined to any season of the year, which things might have given some pretence for thinking it of natural origin, but spread over all the earth, and ravaged all nations, the most unlike and opposite to each other, sparing neither constitution nor age. For whether men differed in place of abode, or in diet, or temperament, or in any thing else in which they do differ from each other, in this disease the variance availed nothing; and it fell on some in summer, on others in winter, and on others at the other seasons. Let would-be philosophers and speculators upon lofty things speak then, each according to his own opinion. I proceed to show whence this disease came, and how it operated to destroy men.

"It began in Egypt, among the inhabitants of Pelusium, and dividing, spread on one side to Alexandria, and the rest of Egypt, and on the other into Palestine, and from thence over the whole earth, advancing by its proper way, and at its proper season; for it seemed to advance according to a prescribed plan, and to abide in every country for an appointed time, sparing none as it passed, and extending on either side to the bounds of the habitable world, as if apprehensive lest any recess should escape. For it missed no island, no cave, no mountain summit inhabited by man; or if it did, and spared, or laid its hand but lightly on the dwellers there, then it returned at a later time, and never touching their neighbours, whom before it had attacked most

bitterly, quitted not that spot until the measure of the dead was fully and justly made up*, proportionate to the mortality of the neighbourhood in the former season. The disease always began at the sea-side, and spread thence into the interior. It reached Constantinople, where I then happened to be, at midsummer in the second year of its progress. The manner of its attack was this: visions of spirits†, in all sorts of human shapes, were seen. The sufferers thought they met a man, who struck them, and were taken ill the same moment that they saw the spectre. At first men strove to turn aside these spirits, by uttering the holiest names, and hallowing themselves as best they could; but they gained nothing by this, for very many who fled even to the churches, perished there; and at last, even when their friends called them, they would not attend, but shut themselves up at home, and pretended not to hear, though their very doors were yielding to the knocking; so terrified were they, lest it should be some spirit‡. Others again were taken ill in a dif-

* Evagrius adds to this a greater marvel; that the citizens of infected places, who were absent from home, sickened and died, even where no other trace of the plague appeared.

† φάσματα δαιμόνων.

‡ This curious passage may be illustrated from a pamphlet entitled 'Medela Pestilentiæ, wherein is contained several Theological Queries concerning the Plague,' &c., by Richard Kephale. "Some I have talked with, who have ingenuously confest they, at their first infection, have felt themselves manifestly stricken, being sensible of a blow suddenly given them, some on the head and neck, others on the back and side, &c.; sometimes so violently that they have been as it were knockt down to the ground, remaining so for a time senseless; whereof some have died instantly, others in a short time after." p. 49. This statement, however, is not entitled to implicit credit; for it is the writer's object to prove the plague a direct infliction from God, without the intervention of secondary causes. "There are two sorts of plague, the one simple, the other putrid. The simple plague is the very influence of the striking angel executing the vengeance of God on the bodies of men. This kind of plague ariseth from no distemperature of

ferent way, and saw some one in a dream, who stood over them and struck them; or heard a warning voice, that they were numbered with the dead. But most fell sick in the following manner, unwarned of their fate either by sleeping or waking visions. They felt feverish on first rising, or while walking or otherwise employed. There was no change in colour, no heat, as when fever supervenes, no inflamation; but until evening the fever was so slight that it suggested no idea of danger, either to the patient or the physician; and indeed none that were ill of it expected to die. But on that day, or the next, or sometimes a few days after, the buboe appeared, mostly in the groin, but in the arm-pit also, or behind the ears, or sometimes on the thighs.

"Thus far the course of the disease was alike in all; for the rest, I cannot tell whether the difference of symptoms arose from difference of constitutions, or is referable to the will alone of Him who sent it. For some fell into a deep stupor, others into raving madness, and each suffered agreeably to the kind of his disorder. For those who were attacked by stupor, forgetting every thing to which they were accustomed, seemed always asleep. And if any person were in attendance on them, from time to time they took food: but some who were neglected perished for want of food. The maniacs, on the contrary, were afflicted by sleeplessness, and continual apparitions, which attacked them, as they thought, meaning to kill them; so that they raised a great disturbance, and made horrid cries, endeavouring to escape. And their attendants, worn by constant labour, suffered most severely, insomuch that men

blood, putrefaction of humours, or influence of stars, but falleth merely from the stroke of God's punishing angel. (Such were the plagues of old, as you may read in Exod. xii. and Numb. xi. 16, 25; also 2 Sam. xxiv. and 2 Kings xix.) *Ibid.*

pitied them no less than those who were ill, not from any danger of contagion * (for no physician nor other person fell sick from contact with the sick or dead; since many employed constantly in nursing or burying, against all expectation, survived this service, and many, for whose illness no cause could be discovered, died at once), but on account of their hard labour did they pity them. For it was necessary to replace the patients who would throw themselves out of bed, and roll on the floor, and to drive and hale them back as often as they tried to rush out of the house; and such as could find water wanted to plunge in, not from desire to drink, for they went mostly to the sea, but at the suggestion of a disordered mind†. And there was also much trouble in administering food, to which they were very adverse. Many died of starvation, or by throwing themselves down heights. Mortification of the buboes carried off such as experienced neither stupor nor frenzy, and they died at last, exhausted by agony. It would be supposed that the others underwent equal torture; but this was not so, the mental disease, however slight, precluding all sensation of pain.

"The physicians, embarrassed by their unacquaintance with the forms of the disease, and thinking that the element of it was secreted in the buboes, determined to examine the dead bodies; and, opening these tumours, found in them something in the likeness of a coal. Some died immediately, some after many days; some threw out black pustules, the

* This passage is remarkable as being probably the earliest assertion extant, of any disease known by the name of *plague* being uncommunicable by contact. Of all the following accounts of similar pestilences, the dread of contagion will be found to form one of the most striking features.

† More probably from that burning heat which Thucydides tells us produced the same effect at Athens.

size of a lentil, all over their bodies, and these lived not one day longer, but died on the instant. Many were carried off at once by vomiting blood. One thing I have to observe, that the most eminent physicians predicted the death of many, who soon after, against all expectation, had nothing ailing, and persisted that many would live, who at that moment were on the point of dissolution. Thus, throughout the disease, there was nothing for which human reason could account*, but in almost every instance some unlooked-for event occurred. The bath did good to some, and no less harm to others. Many who were neglected, died; others unexpectedly survived. Medical treatment had contradictory effects on those who tried it, and in brief, the wit of man found no means of safety, either to ward off or to overcome the evil, but its attack was without apparent cause, and the recovery spontaneous.

"The disease lasted in Constantinople four months, and was at its height for three. At first the number of dead was little greater than ordinary; then the evil increased till it amounted to 5000 daily, and at last to 10,000, and even more. At first every man took care himself to bury those in his household, casting them secretly, or by open force, into other persons' tombs; but at last all was confusion. For slaves remained without masters, and men, formerly rich and happy, were left without common attendance by the sickness and death of their slaves; and many houses were quite emptied of inhabitants: so that some remained many days without burial, because there were no persons that knew them. When the Emperor heard of this, he sent money and soldiers from the palace, and ordered Theodorus, an officer

* οὕτως αἰτία τις ἦν ἀδεσμία ἐν ταυτῇ τῇ νόσῳ ἐς ἀνθρώπου λογισμὸν φέρουσα.

called by the Latins the Referendary, who received all petitions addressed to the Emperor, and signified his pleasure with respect to them, to take charge of this matter; so that they whose houses were not yet entirely desolated performed the funeral rites of their own connexions; and Theodorus, at the imperial expense, and partly also at his own, buried those bodies that had none to care for them. But when the tombs that were already constructed were filled with corpses, trenches were dug all about the city, into which every one cast the dead as he could, and went away; until the grave-diggers, wearied out, took off the roofs of the towers on the wall of the district called Sukai*, into which they cast the bodies promiscuously, and when they were full replaced the roofs. The fetid smell from hence reached the city, and much annoyed the inhabitants, especially when the wind lay in that quarter.

"All rites usual at burials were then neglected: there were no processions, no hymns, nor dirges; but it was sufficient if a man bore off a corpse upon his shoulders, and cast it down in the maritime quarter of the city. From thence the bodies, piled in heaps on barges, were carried off wherever chance directed. At that time the factions† into which the people were before divided, relaxing from their mutual hate, applied themselves conjointly to pay due reverence to the dead, and buried all persons without distinction, whether they had any claim on them or not. And those whose delight had been in base and evil pursuits, shook off their lawless course of life, and accurately performed the duties of religion, not

* The fig-trees: it included the modern suburbs of Pera and Galata.

† For some notice of these singular and virulent factions, see chap. iv.

from having repented, and learnt to govern their passions, nor from being suddenly turned into lovers of virtue; for it is impossible to change thus easily the natural temper, or the result of long continued habit, except by means of a divine interposition. But all were terror-struck at the scenes which surrounded them, and, in the expectation of immediate death, could scarce help assuming a temporary decency of conduct. But these same men, when they were quit of the plague, and supposed themselves in safety, through its departure to some other quarter, returned even to a worse frame of mind than before, and displayed still greater profligacy in their lives, surpassing their former selves in wickedness and lawlessness. So that one might truly affirm that this disease, either by chance or pre-appointment, accurately distinguished and passed by the worst men. But this was shown afterwards.

"At this time you could hardly see any one buying or selling in Constantinople; but those who kept in health sat at home, and took care of the sick, or bewailed the departed. Or if you did meet any one abroad, he was carrying a corpse. All trade was idle; the craftsmen desisted from their crafts, and all persons abandoned whatsoever works they had in hand; so that a perfect famine revelled in a city abounding usually in all good things. To have enough of bread, or of any thing else, was difficult, and was considered a great privilege, so that it was thought that some sick persons met with an untimely end for want of necessaries. To sum up, no robes of state were to be seen in Constantinople, especially while the Emperor himself was ill; but in a city where the court of the whole Roman empire was held, all persons dressed like private men, and remained at home. Such was the course of the pestilence in Constantinople and throughout the

empire: it also fell upon the Persians and all other barbarians*."

On comparing this pestilence with that of Athens, we cannot fail to observe their different effects upon the conduct and tempers of those who were exposed to their influence. In the one, party spirit (and the factions of Constantinople were pursued with a violence as desperate as their origin was trivial) was hushed, and the most profligate were awed into temporary decency; in the other, every chain of society was loosed, every duty toward God and man forgotten in the intoxication of danger, and the craving to drown thought in sensual pleasure. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was truly the maxim of the Athenians. Surely this difference can only be ascribed to the powerful effects produced by the received belief of a future existence upon the minds even of those who, under common circumstances, seemed regardless of such considerations. Among the Athenians practically no such belief existed; it was the creed of their poets, it was inculcated at their mysteries, but it was devoid of all authority to serve as a rule of conduct. In no age or place in which the Christian religion has been professed, however corrupted in principle or depraved in practice, has that general depravity, which is described by Thucydides, ensued in consequence of a similar calamity. The nearest approach to it is to be found in the great plague of Florence, as related by Boccacio. His account indeed, as being the introduction to a work of fiction, might be suspected of exaggeration for purposes of effect. It is, however, completely confirmed by Matteo Villani, in his continuation of the history of Giovanni Villani, his brother, who himself died in this plague. His narration gives some

* Procopius de Bello Persico, lib. ii. cap. 22, 23.

striking particulars of the duration and extent of the calamity, and of the evil consequences which it left behind it; which will serve well to introduce and corroborate the more picturesque and highly-coloured narrative of Boccaccio.

The plague appears to have originated in 1346, in Upper India and China (Cathay), "and coming on day after day, and spreading from nation to nation, within the space of one year it comprehended the third part of the world, which is called Asia. And at the end of this time it fixed on the nations of the Mare Maggiore* and on the coasts of the Mare Tirreno, in Syria and Turkey towards Egypt, and the shores of the Red Sea, and northwards on Russia and Greece, and Armenia, and other adjoining provinces." From the Mare Maggiore the plague was brought to Sicily, Pisa, and Genoa by some Genoese and Catalonian vessels, which fled thence to escape from it, but too late. "Then in the process of the time appointed by God to the nations all Sicily was

* The geography of this passage is not quite clear. Mare Maggiore appears to be the Mediterranean, which still retains that name: see the Vocab. della Crusca. In French, Mer Majeure is the Black Sea, according to Cotgrave and the Encyclopédie. If we adopt this interpretation, the author states that the plague spread from Asia to the Black Sea and the Mare Tireno, probably the Tyrrhene or Adriatic Sea, and then returns to trace its progress in the Mediterranean. On the whole, the former interpretation seems the more probable, though it involves some repetition. The first gives a general statement of the course which the disease took from Asia to the coasts of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas, and then proceeds to particularise. It seems to have spread from India through Persia to Syria, Arabia, and Asia Minor (called in the text Turkey towards Egypt), and from China, or the upper part of India, through the north of Asia to Russia and Greece. The Levant trade introduced it into Sicily, Italy, and the west of Africa, whence it seems to have spread backwards towards Egypt. From Italy it crossed the mountains, and spread northward, even to Denmark, &c., which indeed may have received the infection either from their northern or southern neighbours.

involved in this deadly pestilence, and Africa, in her coasts and in her provinces towards the east, and on the shores of our Mare Tirreno. And the plague coming gradually westward, comprehended Sardinia and Corsica, and all the islands of that sea; and in like manner on the continent of Europe, it seized on the neighbouring parts towards the west, and extended itself southwards, with more violence of assault than in the northern parts. In 1348 all Italy had the disorder, except the city of Milan, and some parts about the Alps, where it pressed little. And in this same year it began to pass the mountains, and to extend itself into Provence, and Savoy and Dauphiné, and Burgundy, and along the sea-coast of Marseilles, and of Aigue Morte *, and through Catalonia, so to the island of Majorca, and in Spain and Granada. And in 1349 it had taken in, on the extreme west, the coasts of the ocean in Europe and Africa, and Ireland, and the island of England and of Scotland, and other islands of the west, and all the land within, with nearly equal mortality, except in Brabant where it did little mischief. And in 1350 it seized the Germans and Hungarians, Friesland, Denmark, the Goths and Vandals, and the other people and nations of the north." The time during which the pestilence raged, in each country which it successively seized upon, is stated by Villani to have been about five lunar months †, lasting at Florence from the early part of April, 1348, to the beginning of September in

* A small town in the province of Languedoc, in the department of Gard. It was formerly a seaport, and Louis IX. of France twice embarked from it for the Holy Land, in 1248, 1269. By the gradual accretion of land at the mouth of the Rhone it is now three leagues from the sea, in a sandy plain, with unwholesome air, from the quantity of stagnant water about it.

† In France this pestilence is said to have lasted about eight months in each place which it attacked. Sismondi, Hist. des Francais.

the same year: and he estimates the mortality in that city and district, and in other regions, as far as report enabled him to form a judgment, at three out of five, of all sexes and ages, reckoning the poor with the rich; the poor, however, being somewhat the most diminished, because the pestilence began among them first, and they had less aid against it, and more discomforts and wants. The neglect, however, both of rich and poor, according to Villani, as well as Boccacio, appears to have been very general; but he adds a notice of the failure of the policy of those who withdrew themselves from the danger, and "shut themselves up in solitary places where the air was healthy, provided with every comfort for living, where there was no suspicion of infection, yet in different countries the judgment of God, against which there is no shutting of the door, struck them down, just as the others who had taken no care for themselves. And many others who had made themselves ready for death to save their relations and friends in their sickness escaped, although they had the disorder, and many had it not at all, though they continued this service *."

This is an unintentional, and therefore an unsuspicious testimony to the absence of really contagious properties in this pestilence, as well as in the one described by Procopius. Boccacio, on the contrary, describes the virulence of the contagion in the strongest terms.

Upon this plague, and upon the practice alluded to by Villani, of withdrawing into sequestered retreats, Boccacio has formed the groundwork of his celebrated collection of tales. In an introduction he describes the phenomena of the disease, and the appearance of the city; and relates how a mixed party of both sexes, casually assembled, resolved to quit a scene of such danger and misery, and seek security

* Matteo Villani, lib. i. cap. 1.

in the loneliness of the country, and recreation in each other's society. The tales are supposed to be related by each in turn for the amusement of the rest. Boccacio's description of the plague runs as follows:—

"It was in the year 1348 that the deadly pestilence reached the noble city of Florence, the fairest of all in Italy; a plague, which whether proceeding from the influence of the heavenly bodies, or sent for our iniquities upon men by the just anger of God for our correction, began some years before in the eastern regions, deprived these of an innumerable quantity of living beings, and then communicating from one place to another, spread itself miserably, without stopping, towards the west. Prudence and human foresight availed nought against it, though the city was carefully cleansed from much filth by officers appointed for that purpose, and all the sick were forbidden to enter it, and much attention given to the preservation of health: nor was there more profit from the humble supplications made to God by devout persons, not once, but often, both in formal processions and in other manners: but the plague began to show forth its sad effects in horrible and wonderful fashion almost in the beginning of the above-named year. The symptoms were not such as they had been in the east, when bleeding at the nose was the sure sign of inevitable death; but at the beginning of the disease certain swellings appeared, alike in men and women, either in the groin or under the arm; some of which grew to the size of a common apple, some to that of an egg, and some more and some less, and the common people called them boils. And in a short time this deadly boil spread from the two parts of the body already mentioned, and began to rise indifferently in every part of the body, and soon after this the characteristic of the disease began to change into black or livid spots, which appeared on the arms and thighs, and every other part of the body of many

patients, in some cases large and few, and in others small and thick. And as the boil had originally been, and still was a most unfailing indication of approaching death, so were these spots, whenever they appeared. Nor did it seem that the skill of any physician, or the power of any medicine, availed to cure these diseases, or was of any service; on the contrary, whether it were that the nature of the evil would not allow it, or that the medical attendants (the number of whom, besides the really skilful, had become exceedingly great, and comprised both men and women, who never had had any medical instruction), in their ignorance did not know whence it proceeded, and consequently could not take proper measures against it, the result was that not only few recovered, but almost all died within the third day from the appearance of the above-named symptoms, some a little sooner and some a little later, and most of them without any fever, or other incidental symptom. And the violence of the plague was the greater, because it spread from the sick to the sound by their mutual communication, just as fire catches dry or greasy substances when they are brought close to it. And the evil went yet farther; for not only by conversation and intercourse with the sick did the sound get the disease, and the occasion of the like death, but even the touch of clothes, or any thing else which had been touched or used by the sick, seemed to carry with it the same disease, and communicated it to the toucher. It is a marvel to hear the tale which I have to tell; indeed had not many, and I myself with my own eyes, seen it, I should hardly have dared to believe, much less to write it, however trustworthy had been my informant. I say then that such was the virulence of the plague in spreading from one subject to another, that not only man gave it to man, but this much more remarkable circumstance often visibly

occurred, namely, that something which had belonged to a man sick or dead of the disease, being touched by another animal not of the human race, not only infected it with the disease, but killed it in a very short time; of which my own eyes, as I just now mentioned, among other instances, received proof one day in the following manner. The rags of a poor man who died of the plague were thrown into the public street, and a couple of pigs came up, and rooted among them a great deal with their snouts, as their manner is, and took them in their teeth, and shook them against their faces; and both, in a very little while after, reeling about some time as if they had taken poison, fell dead to the ground upon the rags which they had so roughly handled. Hence, and from many other similar or more alarming circumstances, there arose various fears and fancies in those who still remained alive, and almost all of them tended towards one very cruel conclusion, to avoid and fly from the sick, and every thing belonging to them, for every one believed that by so doing he would secure himself. Some were of opinion that moderate living, and avoiding all excess, had much effect towards resisting this calamity: and these made their parties, and lived away from all others, and collecting together and shutting themselves up in houses where there were no sick, and for their better living using the most delicate food and the best wines with the utmost temperance, and avoiding all luxury, there they tarried, without allowing themselves to speak to any one, or to hear any news from abroad of the dead or the ill, passing their time in music and such pleasures as they could obtain. Others held a contrary opinion, and asserted that the surest remedy for the disease was to drink freely, and to enjoy themselves, and to go about singing and amusing themselves, and to indulge their appetites in every way

they could, and to laugh, and make sport of every thing that occurred. And just as they said they acted, as far as they could; going night and day now to one tavern and now to another, drinking without stint or measure, and doing this for the most part in other men's houses, provided only that they found any thing there that was to their taste or fancy. And this they could easily do, because every one, as if he had no longer to live, had, as it were, abandoned his property, so that most houses had become common; and a stranger used them, if he happened to come to them, just as their own masters would have done. With all this brutal conduct, they always avoided the sick as much as they could. And in this affliction and wretchedness of the city, the respected authority of laws, both divine and human, was almost entirely fallen to decay and dissolved, from the condition of their ministers and officers; for these, like other men, were all dead or sick, or else left so destitute of assistants that they could perform no duty: so that every one might do whatever pleased him best.

"Many others held a middle course, not confining themselves so closely in their diet as the first, nor indulging themselves so freely as the second in drinking and other excesses. These used things in moderation, according to their appetites, and without shutting themselves up, went about, some of them carrying flowers in their hands, some scented herbs, and some divers kinds of spices, which they often applied to their noses, thinking it best to cherish the brain with scents of this kind, since all the air seemed thick and noisome with the stench of the dead bodies, and the diseased parts, and the medicines. Others were of a more inhuman opinion (though perhaps a safer one), and said that there was no better remedy against pestilences, nor so good, as to run away from them. And many men and women, influenced by this reasoning, and caring

for nothing but themselves, abandoned their own cities, their own houses, their habitations, and their relations, and their property, and went to other men's country establishments, or at least to their own: as if the anger of God, when stirred up to punish the iniquity of men with this pestilence, would not follow them wherever they were, but had only determined to destroy those who were to be found within the walls of their city; or as if they thought that no one ought to remain in it, and that its last hour was come. And although these, with their various modes of thinking, did not all die, so also did they not all escape: on the contrary, many of every opinion growing sick every where, those who while themselves well had given the example to those who still remained so, were left to languish almost entirely deserted. And, not to mention that one fellow-citizen avoided another, and hardly any neighbour took any care of another, and relations seldom or never visited each other, with such alarm had this calamity seized on the hearts of men and women, that brother abandoned brother, and uncle nephew, and sister brother, and often the wife her husband; and, which is yet stranger and hardly credible, fathers and mothers were shy of visiting and attending upon their children, as if they were not their own. The result was, that the countless multitude of men and women who were ill, had nothing to depend upon, except either the kindness of friends, and these were few, or else the avarice of servants, who were induced by large and disproportionate wages to give their attendance. And even of them the number was small, and men and women they were of rude understanding, and generally unaccustomed to such services, and hardly of any use except to hand to the patients such things as they asked for, or to observe when they died: and often while rendering such services as these, they lost their lives for

their pains. From this desertion of the sick by their neighbours, and relations, and friends, and this scarcity of servants, there spread a practice such as had hardly ever been heard of, that no lady, however elegant, or fair, or young, if taken ill, would object to have a man in attendance on her, be he what he might, young or old, or was ashamed to discover to him any part of her person, just as she would have done to a woman, if the need of her disorder did but require it: and this perhaps in after times, rendered those who recovered less scrupulous in their conduct. The same want of attendance also occasioned the death of many, who might perhaps have escaped if they had had assistance; and thus, partly for want of fitting services, which the sick could not have, and partly from the violence of the plague, the number of those who died day and night in the city was so great, that it was astounding even to hear, much more to see: and thus, almost of necessity, there arose among those who were left alive practices contrary to the former custom of the citizens.

"It was the custom, as we still see it to this day, that female relations and friends assembled in the house of the deceased, and there bewailed him, with his yet nearer female connexions. And his male neighbours and many of his townsmen, with his own nearest friends, met separately from the women before his house; and thither, according to his rank, came also the clergy, and the deceased was borne on the shoulders of men of his own rank, with funeral ceremony of wax tapers and chanting, to the church which he had chosen for a burial-place before his death. But these observances, after the fury of the plague began to rise, almost entirely ceased, and other new practices came in their room. For not only did people die without having many women about them, but there were a good many who passed away from

this life without having any one to witness it: and few indeed were those, to whom were granted the piteous lamentations and bitter tears of their connexions. On the contrary, instead of these, were heard in most cases laughter, and jests, and good fellowship: and ladies for the most part laying aside the tenderness of their sex, had very completely made themselves masters of this practice, as thinking it for their own safety. And few were there whose bodies were followed to the church by more than ten or a dozen of their neighbours; and the bier was not borne by honourable citizens, friends of the deceased, but a sort of grave-diggers who came from the lowest order of the people, and did these services for hire, took it up and carried it with hurried steps, not to the church which he had himself appointed before his death, but generally to the nearest, following four or six clergy with few tapers, and generally without any; and then the priests with the assistance of these grave-diggers, without troubling themselves about any over long or solemn offices, laid the corpse as quick as possible in the first burial-place which they found unoccupied. The condition of the lowest class, and probably of a great part of the middle class, was full of far greater wretchedness than this; for these were generally kept to their houses either by hope or by poverty, and thus remaining in their neighbourhoods, they sickened by thousands in the day, and receiving no service or assistance, they almost all died without any thing to save them. Many were there who came to their end both by day and night in the public streets, and many others who died in their own houses, and their neighbours had no knowledge that they were dead, till they discovered it by the stench of the putrefying corpses: and the whole place was full of these and others who died on every side. In most neighbourhoods one practice was observed; namely, that the people of the

vicinity, moved as much by the fear that the putrefying of the dead bodies might injure themselves, as by the affection which they had borne to the departed, with their own hands, and by the assistance of porters, when they could get them, brought down from their houses the corpses of those who were already gone, and set them before their doors; and there, especially in the morning, any one who had gone about might have seen them without number. Then biers were brought thither, and there were some who for want of regular biers laid the corpses on tables. Nor was it only once that one bier bore two or three corpses at the same time; but a long list might be made, where the same bier held the wife and the husband, or two or three brothers, or father and son, or some such load. And infinitely often did it happen, that when two priests were going with a crucifix for some corpse, three or four biers were carried after it; and the priests, when they thought they had one body to bury, had six, or eight, or sometimes more. Nevertheless, the dead were not honoured with any tears, or lights, or attendance; on the contrary, matters had come to that pass, that no more care was had of men who died, than now would be of goats: so that it very plainly appeared that the greatness of the calamity had taught even the simplest and most unthinking, the lesson which the natural course of events had not been able, by few and slight sufferings, to impress upon the wise, namely, the necessity of patience under suffering. So great was the number of the bodies which were every day, and almost every hour borne in concourse to every church, that the consecrated ground was not sufficient for the burials, especially if it were desired to give to every body a place of its own, according to the ancient practice. Great trenches therefore were dug in the burying-grounds of the churches, after every part was filled; into which the

bodies which were brought afterwards were thrown by hundreds. There they were stowed layer upon layer, like the merchandise in a ship, each layer covered with a little earth, till they reached the top of the trench. And not to go on any longer hunting out every particular of our past misery, which befel us in this city, I say that while the time was passing so cruelly in it, the surrounding country was not in any wise spared. For there, not to speak of the castles, which in proportion to their size were like the city, in the scattered villages and in the fields the poor and wretched labourers and their families, without any care of physician or aid of servant, by the way side, on the land they tilled, and in their houses, died alike by day and night, not like men, but almost like beasts. So they became wanton in their habits, just like the townspeople, and paid no attention to their affairs or business; but all, as if they expected to die on the day which they found they had reached, would do nothing to secure the future produce of their cattle, and of the land, and of their own past labours, but exerted themselves as much as possible to consume those which they found at hand. Thus it happened that the kine, the asses, the sheep, the pigs, the goats, the poultry, and even the dogs, creatures most attached to mankind, driven out of their own houses, went about as it pleased them over the fields, where the corn was left, not merely unharvested, but uncut. And many of them, almost like reasoning beings, after they had fed well in the day, at night returned home without any guidance of their shepherd. What more can be said, leaving the country and returning to the city, but that such and so great was the cruelty of heaven, and perhaps in some degree that of men, that between March and the following July, between the virulence of the pestilential disease, and the bad attendance on the sick, or their

abandonment in their need on account of the fear entertained by the sound, more than a hundred thousand human beings are confidently believed to have died within the walls of the city of Florence; though before this deadly occurrence, perhaps the whole number would not have been estimated so high. Oh, how many great palaces, how many fair houses, how many noble mansions, formerly fully inhabited, now remained empty, from their lords and mistresses to the lowest menial! Oh, how many memorable races, how many vast inheritances, how many splendid fortunes found themselves left without any right successor! How many gallant men, how many fair women, how many comely youths, whom not only any common observer, but Galen, Hippocrates, or Æsculapius would have judged in the soundest health, breakfasted in the morning with their relations, companions and friends, and then, the evening after, supped in the other world with their ancestors."

The relaxation of morals consequent upon this pestilence is more fully described by Villani.

"In this season of the deadly pestilence, Pope Clement VI. made great general indulgences of the punishment of all sins to those who on repentance and confession requested it of their confessors, and died; and in this mortality every Christian, thinking that he was dying, set himself well in order, and with much contrition and repentance they gave up their souls to God. And the few wise men who remained alive expected many things, which through the corruption of sin turned out otherwise, the very contrary most marvellously coming to pass. For they thought that such as God by his favour had kept alive, having seen the extermination of their nearest connexions, and having heard the like tidings of all the nations of the world, would have become of better condition, humble, virtuous, of the true faith, and would

have kept themselves from iniquities and sins, and would have been full of love and charity one towards another. But now that the mortality was at an end, the contrary appeared; for men finding themselves few, and rich by their heirships and successions to earthly goods, forgetting things past as if they had never been, gave into a more unhandsome and disorderly life than they had used before. For wandering about at leisure they dissolutely indulged in the sin of gluttony, banquets, taverns, delicate food, gaming, running without bridle into luxury, which they sought in strange clothing, and unusual fashions, and unseemly manners, changing the forms of all household goods. And the people, men and women, because of the exceeding abundance which they found of all things, would not labour at their accustomed trades, and would have the dearest and most delicate viands for their subsistence, and married at will; the maid-servants and all the lowest women dressing themselves in all the beautiful and valuable attire of the honourable ladies who were dead. And almost all our city, without any check, ran into a discreditable course of life, and so, and worse, did the other cities and provinces of the world. And according to all the accounts we have received, there was no place where the living kept themselves in continence, when they had escaped from the divine wrath, supposing that the hand of God was weary. But, according to the prophet Isaiah, the wrath of God is not shortened, neither is his hand weary: but he has much pleasure in his mercy, and labours in long-suffering, that he may bring back sinners to conversion and repentance; and he punishes temperately.

"It was supposed that, through the failure of the people, there would for a long time be abundance of every thing which the earth produces; and, on the contrary, through the ingratitude of men, every thing

came to unusual scarcity, and so continued a long time. In some countries there were several unusual famines. So also it was expected that there would be abundance of clothing, and of all other things which are of service to the human body beyond subsistence: and, in fact, the contrary came to pass for a long time; for most things were worth twice as much as they used to be before the aforesaid mortality, and more. And labour, and manufactures of all sorts, rose regularly to more than twice the ordinary rate. Lawsuits, disputes, controversies, and riots arose on every side among the citizens of every country, on account of their inheritances and successions. And our city of Florence long filled her courts with them, with great expenditure and unusual charges. Wars were stirred up, and various scandals throughout all the universe, contrary to the common expectation of men."

These Italian accounts might be suspected of exaggeration, but they are fully supported by ultramontane authority; and though the pestilence of 1348 is usually known as the plague of Florence (a distinction which it owes probably to Boccacio), it raged even more destructively beyond the Florentine territory, and beyond the Italian peninsula. The French and English historians in particular bear testimony to the extent of misery produced by it. "Never in old times was it heard or seen that such a multitude of people lay dead: the evil seemed to grow by imagination and contagion, for if a whole man visited a sick man, it was very seldom that he escaped. Thus in many towns and villages the priests fled to avoid attending upon the dying: in many places, out of twenty persons, not two remained alive. At Paris, in the hospital of the Hôtel Dieu, the mortality was such, that for a long time five hundred corpses were carried in carts daily to the burial-ground of the

Innocents*." "In Provence and Languedoc two-thirds of the people were estimated to have perished; in the rest of France one-third. Allowing for the inclination which all men have to magnify those calamities, the naked facts of which are terrible enough, there is here evidence of a mortality hardly to be equalled†."

In England the same pestilence raged with destructive energy among the poor, but spared the higher orders. Hardly any of the nobility or bishops died, with this remarkable exception, that the see of Canterbury was thrice vacated by death in one year. It is also recorded that there was a great murrain among the cattle, and that neither beast nor bird of prey would touch their carcases. Meat in consequence became exceedingly scarce, and the harvest having failed, not so much for deficiency of crops, as for want of hands to get it in, the distress was very great. About harvest time a reaper was not to be had for less than eight-pence, nor a mower for less than twelve-pence a day, besides victuals, "which in those days was excessive wages, money having then a ten-fold value to what it hath now."

Another celebrated pestilence is that which desolated Milan in the year 1630. The duchy was then subject to Spain, and like all the foreign dependencies and conquests of that once powerful kingdom, had reason to rue the day that gave it such a master. Domestic misrule, the licensed insolence of the nobles, the supine indifference of the government to all but political crimes, combined with the miseries of almost constant war to destroy the husbandman's hopes, and paralyse his industry. At length natural causes seemed to unite with political ones to work evil to this unhappy country. In the year 1627 an un-

* Continuatio Nangii, ap: Sismondi.

† Sismondi, Histoire des Francais.

favourable season and defective harvest produced an alarming scarcity, which was aggravated into famine by a second failure in the succeeding year. The consequences of this scarcity were soon evident in the vast number of persons without employment, or means of subsistence, who were congregated in the streets of Milan. It was the pernicious fashion of that time for the gentry to maintain a number of idle and dissolute followers—men regardless of obligations human or divine, who owned no law except their master's will, chosen and valued for their readiness to undertake, and dexterity to execute his orders, alike unmindful of their guilt or danger. The rich walked the streets followed by a train of these bravoes (the Italian name is naturalized in our language), swords were drawn upon the slightest pretence, and their brawls openly insulted and defied the law. These men were the first to be turned adrift when vice and luxury began to feel the pressure of want.—"It would have been laughable," says a contemporary, "had such a feeling been consistent with the consciousness of our own danger, to see the change in those persons who used to be bugbears to all. The nobles now walked unattended, civilly, *hanging their ears* (demissis auribus), as if to bespeak peace by their demeanour. No less striking was it to see their domestic bullies, who used to perfume the very air, reduced to beg half naked through the city *." The sufferings of these ruffians would excite little sympathy, but the famine pressed equally upon the honest and industrious. The rich being compelled by increasing scarcity to contract their expenses, artificers and tradesmen, one after another, were thrown out of employ; and thus the streets were filled with a starving crowd, daily increased by those

* Ripamonte, De Peste Mediolani, p. 17. From this interesting work the whole of the following account of the plague of Milan is taken.

who flocked from the country and from neighbouring towns, reduced to depend upon charity, and allured to the capital by its superior wealth.

So great was the evil, such the scenes of misery presented to the eye in every street, that the municipal authorities resolved on opening two vast establishments—the lazaretto, or hospital for persons with infectious disorders, and a building usually appropriated to the reception of foundlings. To these places all mendicants and persons without means of subsistence were taken by the police, and maintained at the public expense. At one of these establishments 3000 persons were admitted within a few days, and fresh inmates were continually presenting themselves. Private munificence materially lightened the heavy charge thus laid upon the public treasury. But, then as now, numbers were so devoted to a vagabond life, that rather than accept food, clothing, and shelter, under the moderate restraints necessary to preserve order in such a multitude, they would have remained in rags, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and dependent even for the bread of life upon casual relief. To quicken the diligence of the police, a small reward was given for each person whom they brought in. At length the discontent among those who were shut up, generated by the restrictions on their liberty, and heightened by a mortality far less probably than that which took place among them while scattered abroad, but more alarming because brought all at once into view, became so great, that the magistrates broke up these establishments, and the misery of unbounded beggary again prevailed throughout Milan.

During this period the pestilence lurked in the Grison mountains: it had even appeared in the capital; but the deaths were few, the disease spread not, and both magistrates and people, with a common infatuation, were eager to deny the existence of danger

until it was too late to guard against it. In the autumn of 1629 a farther evil visited this unhappy country. The Spanish governor had granted a free passage to a German army, intended to oppose the French interest in the duchy of Mantua. These men, with the brutal licentiousness which preeminently disgraced the mercenary soldiers of that age, inflicted all the miseries of war upon a friendly population. Blood, rapine, and fire marked their path; the inhabitants concealed their property, and abandoned their houses, but it was often in vain; their persecutors spread over the country, and if discovered they were compelled by torture to reveal their stores. And as the first of these locusts left nothing for those who followed, the latter often vented their wrath and disappointment upon those poor people, whose only crime was having lost their all. Thus all who could fly, took shelter in the most retired fortresses, and there endured extreme hardship, until the last of these ill-omened allies had disappeared. And such was the devastation, that the miseries of their temporary shelter were little worse than those endured after their return home*.

Still further to increase the terrors of these troops, it was reported that they bore the plague along with them, from which indeed the German armies were said seldom to be entirely free. Superstition added to the general alarm. A comet appeared in 1628; another in 1630. Belief in the malign influence of these bodies was then general. Prophecies were current, said to be of ancient date, denouncing plague and famine in these years. It will be evident to the reader that no place could be better fitted to receive and nourish a pestilential disorder than Milan was at this time. Scarcity of food and want of cleanliness, inseparable from a poor and crowded population, and

* The 'Promessi Sposi' of Manzoni contains a most vivid and interesting picture of this portion of the history of Milan.

a summer of unusual heat, combined to favour the reception of the enemy. In November, 1629, a soldier quartered at Chiavenna returned to his home at Milan. He was taken ill, removed to the hospital, and died; and on examination the signs of plague were found on his body, and the subsequent death of all persons who had been under the same roof made it evident that the plague had gained entrance. But at first the progress of the disease was slow, so slow that doubts were entertained whether it were really the plague; and while the magistrates were dilatory and remiss in taking the usual precautions, the common people were especially unwilling to admit so unpalatable and alarming a report. Fear of the sufferings, and disgust at the restrictions and discipline of an infected city, made them furious against all who warned them of their danger. The first physician in Milan, a man eminent for charity in the exercise of his profession as well as skill, and therefore highly venerated even by the populace, was assaulted by a mob, and obliged to fly for his life, upon no other provocation than his belief in the reality of the disease.

But unfortunately incredulity was of no avail to check its progress; and at last the magistrates were compelled to place guards and barriers at the gates, and to exclude all persons and all articles coming from suspected places. Not only the sick, but all persons living in the same house with them, were removed to the lazaretto, or, if suffered to remain, were placed under the charge of an officer appointed to ensure their perfect seclusion. Those whose health was suspected were allowed to remain under similar, but somewhat lighter restraint. And having done what was possible in the way of precaution with little benefit, for the mortality increased fearfully, the authorities turned for help to St. Charles Borromeo, the late Archbishop of Milan, whose body, enclosed in a crystal shrine, formed the most precious treasure of the

cathedral. There was at least a propriety in applying to him in preference to any other saint in the calendar; for his liberality, and intrepidity, and zeal in his pastoral duties were eminently displayed in 1576, when Milan laboured under the same calamity.



From a Medal of Cardinal Borromeo

It was determined therefore, with the permission of the church, to carry these relics in solemn procession round the city, and to implore the continued patronage and intercession of the saint, who in life had zealously watched over the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of his people It was ordered that no expense be spared to increase the splendour of the rite, and testify due reverence to the hallowed remains, and accordingly the streets through which

the pomp was to pass were cleared, and cleansed, and decked with tapestry and other ornaments, as if for a festival. The houses of the poor, and those which the pestilence had left untenanted, were furnished at the expense of the city, or by the piety of some wealthy neighbour. The latter should rather have been left in their desolation, bare and mournful, to testify to the extent of the distress, and implore, more touchingly than words could do it, the divine protection. The shrine was borne through the chief streets surrounded by the priesthood, the nobles, and the magistrates, barefoot, and in penitential dresses, and followed by a multitude: and for a moment all minds were abstracted from their own and the common danger, to gaze upon the mitred skull, visible through its transparent covering, whose eyeless sockets and grinning jaws might have seemed to mock the hopes so fondly and vainly entertained.

The procession took place on June 3d: at its close the saint returned to his resting-place; and from that time forward the disease raged with redoubled fury, and the Milanese were reduced to despair. For eight days and nights, however, the shrine was deposited upon the high altar, surrounded by a concourse of votaries, beseeching help with tears and cries. The answer, our author says, was comprised in the number of the dying; and lest the interpretation should be doubtful, that number increased until 1800 perished daily. Strange infatuation! where every man should have avoided his dearest friend as charged with death, to congregate thousands in supplication against an enemy, to whom in that very act they gave a more extensive and deadly power!

The speedy burial of the dead is commonly one of the great difficulties in time of pestilence. Here it was little felt. There was a class of men called Monatti,

professed attendants on the plague, and ever ready for, and rejoicing in the most dangerous and disgusting services. Ripamonte speaks of them as a class well known to every body, and passes in silence over the origin of the name, and the nature of the reward which tempted, or the tie, whether hereditary or other, which bound them to so desperate a service: curious points on which we have failed to procure information elsewhere. It was the duty of these men to convey the sick to the hospitals, and attend them there; to watch over those who remained at home, and to carry away the dead for interment. Strange and revolting were these funeral processions. They were preceded by two men with bells, who warned all persons to avoid the way, that the Monatti were at hand, death and pestilence in their train. Then came carts with the dead piled in disorder, many stripped even of their last covering, when it was such as to excite the cupidity of the ruffians in charge of them; while the long hair of women trailing on the ground, and limbs and heads dangling over the sides, and answering to the rough movements of the vehicle, and fallen bodies strewed along the ground*, presented a spectacle the more revolting for the grotesqueness that mingled with its horror. Meanwhile the Monatti sat carousing in the midst of death with indecent laughter and jests, and exultation in the general calamity; indulging the avowed hope, that the mortality might never cease till the population of Milan was exterminated, and the wealth of her palaces left unowned and undefended, to be appropriated by the plunderer at will. Necessary as these ministers were, their

* Ripamonte, book i. If the reader can consult the original, he will see that the description is not overcharged. The Monatti, he continued, practised all sorts of insult towards living and dead, and dragged bodies along as rudely as a butcher drives his calves to the shambles.

presence added fresh miseries to those under which the city groaned. Reckless and desperate, hating others in proportion as they were loathed and despised, they were prepared for any crime that passion and interest might prompt. Their duty called them into all suspected houses, and at such a season every house lay open to suspicion. Every abode, every room therefore was exposed to their intrusion; and robbery was the most frequent, but not the worst end to which these ill-omened visits were perverted. Other profligates too assumed their dress and ensigns, and sometimes when the true and false Monatti met, strife and bloodshed added new horrors to the sick chamber or the dying bed.

The general distress, as misery is ever prone to credulity, was in no small degree increased by the most absurd and wicked reports. It was supposed that foreign princes had generated, or, at all events, were maintaining the plague, with the view of weakening the power of the state, and taking undisturbed possession of it, when reduced to a solitude. A belief was propagated, that persons were employed to besmear every thing likely to be touched with the most foul and pestilential compounds. The walls of houses, the fastenings of doors, household implements, clothes, men's persons, every thing fit to spread the infection, nay, the very standing corn in the fields, now ripe for the sickle, were thought to be poisoned by some unseen enemy. The belief originated in an unexplained appearance, the result most likely of some wanton joke, or malicious deception. On the morning of April 23d, the fronts of houses throughout the whole length of the city were observed by the earliest passengers to be marked with spots, appearing as if a sponge filled with the matter of the plague-sores had been pressed against them. The whole population ere long was in a commotion, and poured out to

see this strange phenomenon; but this was before the fury of the pestilence, and the alarm created was forgotten, until revived by the increasing mortality. Then reports were circulated, and greedily received, that emissaries of hostile princes were diligently engaged in spreading infectious poison through the city; nay, that the powers of hell, as well as human principalities, were leagued against it, and that the devil had taken a house in Milan, where his head-quarters were established, and the pestiferous unguents prepared and distributed. One man related how, as he stood in front of the cathedral, he saw a chariot drawn by six white horses, and followed by a numerous attendance, in which a person sat, of princely demeanour, though his dark and deep-burnt complexion, his floating hair, the fire of his eye, and the threatening expression of his lip, gave such an air to the countenance as he had never beheld on mortal face. The stranger stopped before him, and bade him mount. He complied, and was carried to a house which appeared like many others; but on entering, he saw strange and wonderful things, in which majesty was mixed with horrors, delight with fear. In one part thick flashing lightning dispelled the seeming night which reigned elsewhere: here a spectral senate held its meetings; there vast empty chambers and gardens extended, and from the brow of a dimly-seen rock waters poured abundantly into a basin placed to receive them; and he narrated a variety of other prodigies. The tempter concluded by showing him vast treasures, and promising that they should be his own, and every wish be gratified, if he would bow the knee to him and do his bidding. But the temptation was insufficient to overcome his virtue, and he was suddenly transported back to the spot whence he had been taken. The motive for concocting such tales is as evident as their extravagance: yet they roused

the populace to such fury, and such jealous suspicion, that many fell victims not to any imprudence, but to the commonest and most natural actions, which the prevailing frenzy interpreted into the dreadful crime of anointing. In sight of Ripamonte, from whom we derive this account, an old man past eighty, well known as a daily frequenter of the church of St. Antony, was seen, on rising from his knees, to wipe the bench on which he meant to sit with the skirt of his cloak. Some women raised a cry, that the old man was anointing the seats. The church was more thronged than usual, for it was a festival day. The people ran together in an instant: the old man was dragged by the hair, beaten, and kicked; the only thing that saved his life for an instant was the wish to carry him before the judges, and extort some knowledge of his accomplices. "I saw him," says Ripamonte, "dragged away thus, and never heard more of him. I think that he must have died on the instant. Those who were induced by pity to inquire of his character, reported that he was a good and honest man."

With the people in this temper, accusations and convictions for a crime probably fictitious were not wanting. The first victim was a person employed by the tribunal of health to make the daily round of a district, and report the names of all who were ill. He was accused by some women, who described his person, and swore that they saw him from their windows daub the walls with some preparation. Being put to the torture, he endured it with wonderful constancy until the fourth day, and then, when the judges wearied by his firmness were about to release him, he made a sort of voluntary confession, and named one Mora, a barber, as the person who had given him the ointments. Other circumstances he added, grossly false, as that the barber had given him at the same time a potion which took away all power of con-

fession, until he had undergone a certain process of torture. The house of Mora was found full of medical or chemical vessels and preparations, (it was then usual for barbers to practise surgery,) which he declared were meant as preservatives to be distributed among his friends. The physicians who inspected them were of a different opinion, and declared them to be prepared for poisons; and on their report the barber was put to the torture, where, after several times alternately confessing and recanting, he at length made full acknowledgment of his guilt, and of all the methods which he had employed. Others meanwhile were apprehended upon the same charge, and made similar confessions under the cogent arguments of the rack; and all were put to death with circumstances of no common cruelty. Mora's house was demolished, and a column built on the spot where it stood, with an inscription to commemorate his guilt. A sort of madness seems to have been epidemic, and it is not improbable that some persons may have been led to attempt the crime by the mere force of imagination, as sometimes a murder of unusual horror seems to work upon minds morbidly susceptible of such impressions, till they believe themselves irresistibly driven to commit the same offence. Some persons who were taken within the lazaretto, with boxes and bottles, as if prepared to collect the putrid humour of the plague-boils, which was believed to be the chief ingredient of these diabolical preparations, confessed their guilt, persisted in their confession under the severest tortures, and yet under the gallows asserted, that though they died willingly in expiation of other guilt, they were innocent in this point, even of the knowledge of unguents, or of the magical or diabolical practices which were said to be joined with them. One man who lay sick in the lazaretto, confessed that he had entered into a com-

pact with the devil, and pointed out the spot where his poisons would be found. He died in raving madness (no uncommon symptom in the disease), calling for the means of self-destruction, and attempted to cut his throat with a sharp piece of money. A woman also confessed, and named her daughter as an accomplice: and the instruments of infection were found in the possession of the latter. It added no small credit to these stories that four men were said to have been detected in the palace at Madrid, with medicaments prepared for communicating the plague, yet they escaped, and left no trace of their flight. This news came in a letter signed by the king's own hand, addressed to the governor of the province, and warning him to be upon his guard. There is some justice in an observation made by our author, that it seemed fated through the whole of this business that things doubtful and things certain should be intermixed, and mutually involve each other in obscurity. The total disappearance of four men, detected in a crime of such moment, even in a royal palace, where of all places their apprehension would appear to be certain, bears such an air of mystification as throws discredit on the whole story: yet we cannot suppose the Spanish monarch a party to the practising of so mischievous a deceit upon his own suffering subjects; and scarcely any other person would dare, or could be interested, to get up a trick so dangerous, and apparently so unprofitable, to the contrivers and actors in it. But the people, blinded by their fears, saw neither improbability, nor inconsistency in these stories. Ripamonte, evidently himself a sceptic, professes that an author was not free to canvass this subject unreservedly, so obstinately was the belief fixed both in the higher and lower classes, who maintained this breath of rumour as devotedly as they clung to their homes and altars, and all that they held most sacred.

The Italians, owing perhaps to the common use of poisons among them, seem readily to have admitted such reports. When the plague broke out at Naples in 1656, it was said to have been introduced by the Spaniards, who suborned people to scatter poisoned dust in the streets. This was one of the methods which the Milanese anointers were reported to use. Tadini, one of the most eminent physicians then and there practising, who wrote an account of the plague[*], says that he knew two young women, who on crossing themselves with holy water on coming out of church observed that a clammy powder remained on their clothes and persons, wherever the sacred sign had been made. Returning home they were seized with giddiness, and died within two days. This seems a strong case, yet it may be doubted whether they died of the plague, or of imagination, for no marks of the disease appeared on their bodies. Their mother, and those who had waited on them, perished in the same unaccountable way.

Through the whole of this trying season Cardinal Frederick Borromeo, the Archbishop of Milan, distinguished himself by an unceasing zeal in the cause of religion and charity. The ample revenues of his dignity, at all times liberally dispersed among those who needed assistance, were now devoted to the support of the lazarettos; and his private resources were increased by the zeal of the rich, who placed large sums of money at his disposal, confident that in his hands they would be most beneficially and discreetly employed. One remarkable instance of generosity is recorded. Two countrymen requested and obtained admission to the cardinal. "We are two brothers," they said, "husbandmen, whom our father left in possession of a small farm: we have brought here 2000 gold pieces, which hard labour and economy have enabled us to accumulate, and now

[*] Origine e Giornale successi della Gran Peste. Milan, 1648.

lay them at your feet, to be disposed to such charitable uses as shall appear best to you." No less prodigal of his personal safety than of his wealth, this excellent prelate declared that he would never quit the city so long as the plague lasted; and he kept his word, notwithstanding the earnest and importunate solicitations of many who set a higher value on his life than he himself did. He visited the hospitals, the poor, gave free access to every person, however humble, who wished to see him, and directed his especial attention to requiring from the parochial clergy a strict discharge of their duties in this trying season, when the ministration of spiritual assistance to the sick and dying was esteemed more hazardous than mounting a breach, or storming a battery. And it is just to observe that both the parochial and conventual clergy displayed a noble zeal in encountering danger and labour, not only up to, but beyond the strict letter of their duty. They regulated the lazarettos and preserved such order as could be maintained in such establishments, and attended to the bodily and mental wants of their patients, hopeless of preserving their own life through the dangers to which they were exposed, and therefore undeterred by danger when good was to be done. On the contrary, none of the physicians would enter the hospitals. The tribunal of health and the municipal authorities requested the college of that faculty to depute some members of their body to perform that duty: it was answered, that they would send members who should go as far as the walls, keeping however outside the ditch surrounding the establishment, and there do what they could to help the sick, but that no one would consent to enter those roofs to his certain destruction. They tried in vain to bribe men to this service, and were obliged to seek physicians in France and Germany.

Ripamonte possessed a breviary which had been the cardinal's, which contained many manuscript

observations made by him during the progress of the plague. They contain among several curious anecdotes the following observations on the reports prevalent concerning anointers: "Truth and falsehood are readily intermixed, and with respect to this factitious plague many things are said of which you may readily believe a part, and as readily disprove others: and thus I admit some of those stories; others may, I think, be rejected. This I do not hesitate to affirm, that many have thought they could acquit themselves of negligence in exposing themselves to infection, by asserting that the plague which they have themselves caught, has been the work of anointers."

The practices which, whether falsely or truly, were said to exist, are these. Men begged through the city, offering poisoned papers under the appearance of petitions. The earth and its productions, eatables, money given in charity, were poisoned. The fastenings of doors, as being necessarily handled, were special objects of attack; as were also the basins of holy water placed in churches. Poles were used to anoint what was out of reach, and bellows to scatter poisoned dust. "These and other things which were loudly proclaimed, I neither believe entirely," says the cardinal, "nor yet think them reported entirely without foundation." On the whole, without believing that these crimes were committed either at the instigation of foreign princes, or in virtue of an express compact with the devil, the cardinal seems decidedly to incline to the conclusion, that the pestilence was spread, if not originated by artificial means: and to refer the guilt to soldiers (and the mercenaries of that day were men capable of any enormities), and other men of broken fortunes, who hoped to enrich themselves by plunder amid the general confusion, dismay, and death. Before we quit this subject, it is due to his reputation to state that he, and he alone, strongly disapproved of the procession with the body of St.

Charles Borromeo, as furnishing the best opportunity to anointers, if such villains there were, and at all events of ensuring an increase of the disorder; since among such a multitude many persons were sure to bear about them the seeds of infection.

Towards the end of September, the disease began to abate; and its decline was signalized by as impudent a fraud as has ever been practised, even in those earlier times when the power of the church and the blindness of the people were most remarkable. Attached to the Dominican convent there was a church of high reputation, dedicated to the Virgin, in gratitude for her signal kindness towards the city of Milan. On the night of September 22d, the monks were collected, waiting for the matin service, when suddenly their several occupations of praying or sleeping were interrupted by the sound of the church bells. It soon appeared that they were rung miraculously, without touch of mortal fingers*. Some manifested wonder, others fear, according to their different tempers, but all were at a loss to explain the prodigy, until a voice too awful to be human was heard to say, "Mother, I will take pity upon my people." The interpretation of the miracle then was evident: the Virgin had sought and obtained from her Son the remission of the plague, and the next morning the oil which fed the lamp suspended before her image was found to possess a miraculous healing virtue, and was distributed drop by drop to all classes, who crowded, high and low, to receive it; not, we may presume, without a handsome tribute of gratitude to the protectress herself, and to her servants the Dominicans. Ripamonte, cautious of expressing a doubt concerning the anointers, breathes not a syllable from which a want of faith in this miracle can even be inferred: the church was the church of the Inquisition, and it

* Ripamonte does not tell us whether any body went up into the belfry to ascertain this.

was from the Dominican monks that the officers of that institution were chosen. The number of deaths, however, began to diminish about or somewhat earlier than this time, and grew smaller and smaller as the autumn advanced: and by the close of the year Milan was delivered from this dreadful scourge.

The number who died in these few months was registered at 110,000, but this is supposed to have been below the mark, because many persons were privately buried by their friends, to avoid introducing the Monatti into their houses.

The extravagant credulity of the Milanese, and the fury and crimes which sprung from that credulity, may be partially excused on the ground that in that age even learned men believed in the possibility of exciting pestilence by means half-medical, half-magical, and that evil spirits exercised a malign influence over the air, and interfered visibly in diffusing the evil. More than thirty years later, the Jesuit Kircher, a man of various and extensive knowledge, but of a mystic temper, and a firm believer in the power of magic and occult influences, speaks of this plague as produced by the arts of evil men. Nor does he want authorities to strengthen his belief, among whom we may mention Theophrastus, who speaks of a terrible plague produced by poisoners in his own time, and gives the receipt for the pestiferous mixture, the ingredients of which are the putrid bodies of men deceased of the plague, and the bones, marrow, and poison of angry toads, approximating nearly to the receipt given by Ripamonte. To prove that demons may act as the ministers of God's wrath to scatter the seeds of pestilence, he quotes Gregory of Nyssa, a father of the church in the fourth century, who relates in his life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (the wonder-worker), that in a city of Greece, the people being collected in the theatre were much

inconvenienced for want of room and made loud complaints, on which the evil spirit was to reply that there should soon be room enough in the city. And before the audience dispersed, so fierce a pestilence broke out among them, that in brief space a populous city was changed into a desert. Here the drift of the story is evident—it was a warning against theatrical amusements, which the Christians abhorred not only as profane, but as idolatrous, and a proof of the power of the devil over those who frequented them. The Pythagorean philosophers maintained similar doctrines as to the agency of spirits. Apollonius of Tyana, being at Ephesus during a pestilence, observed a demon under the habit of a fisherman busily employed in spreading the infection. He commanded that the fisherman should be stoned, and immediately the plague ceased. Similar stories are told of Pythagoras by Iamblichus. And the monkish writers helped mainly to encourage a belief of the interference of the devil in human affairs, by the many legends in which the spiritual adversary was introduced, to his own discomfiture and to the glory of some favourite saint.

It may reasonably be hoped, almost as much from the improved sanitary regulations and increased cleanliness of our cities, as from the progress of medical science, that no future pestilence will inflict upon Europe sufferings equal to those which have been described, and which are still to follow. To enable us, however, better to appreciate the value of this hope. we may refer shortly to the condition of that science about the period of which we have been speaking. The structure of the body, and the properties of minerals, were for the most part unknown even to the best Greek and Latin physicians; and though anatomy had made considerable progress at the beginning of the seventeenth century, pharmacy had

made little or none. The regular physicians were educated in the schools of universities, where they imbibed that profound respect for the authority of the ancients which characterized the universities of that day, and that love of exclusive privilege which has been charged upon universities in general. Brought up in the fear of Hippocrates and Galen, they received their sayings as oracular, and would probably rather have let a patient die, *secundum artem*, than have employed remedies unsanctioned by their authority. Chemistry meanwhile had made some progress, and in seeking the philosopher's stone, many valuable properties of minerals had been discovered: but the discreditable character of the alchemists, and professional jealousy and prejudice, combined to render those persons, who from their knowledge and their reputation might best have availed themselves of the remedies thus presented, unwilling to profit, or to let others profit, by discoveries made in so irregular a manner. The effect of this ill-judged adherence to the wisdom of antiquity was not of course to stifle the powerful preparations employed by Paracelsus, Van Helmont, and others, but to throw them exclusively into the hands of another party. Hence arose the contending sects of Galenists and chemists, the former employing none but vegetable productions, the latter ridiculing the Galenical pharmacy as cumbrous and ineffectual, and placing their dependance on the newly-discovered properties of mercury, antimony, sulphur, and other metals and earths. It was probably very much owing to this schism that the practice of medicine was so much infested by quacks towards the close of the sixteenth and early in the seventeenth century, more so perhaps than at any other period. The real power of the remedies discarded by the most influential professors of the healing art could not be hidden, and might easily be exag-

gerated; and hence arose a vast multitude of empirics, each with his elixir vitæ, or some infallible medicine or other, which vended under a lofty name, and with the pretence of deep science, gained ready hold upon the credulity of the ignorant and the simple.

> "He 's a rare physician, do him right,
> An excellent Paracelsian, and has done
> Strange cures with mineral physic. He deals all
> With spirits—he. He will not hear a word
> Of Galen, or his tedious receipes *."

Such was the state of medicine in England at this period: of its state in Italy we are not qualified to speak; but, from an instance presently to be quoted, it would seem to have been no more advanced than it was in England. And as there was no disease for which money could not purchase some infallible remedy, so the plague, as the object of most general apprehension, was best of all suited for the impostures of those, whose treasury was the credulity of other people. A reference to any collection of tracts upon this subject, published before or during the year 1665, will satisfy the reader on this head: the examples which follow have occurred during a very cursory examination of one or two volumes, from which they might easily have been multiplied. We find in 'A Joyfull Jewell... first made and published in the Italian tung, by the famous and learned Knight and Doctor M. Leonardo Fioravente,' such receipts as this: "Of Elixir Vitæ, and how to make it, and of his great Vertues." It consists of forty ingredients, such as ginger, juniper, sage, rose-leaves, aloes, figs, raisins, honey, &c., an equal quantity of each. This if it did no good, could perhaps do little harm: but when it is professed that if any use it in time of pestilence, it is impossible he should be infected, the

* Alchemist, act ii. scene 3.

deceit becomes a source of serious evil. Another is worse, and joins blasphemy to impudence. "A great and miraculous secret to help the pestilence, with great ease and in a short time; a remedy and secret revealed of God miraculously When a man hath a pestilent sore, let there be made a hole in the earth, and there let him be buryed all saving the neck and head, and there let him stand xii or xiiii houres and he shall be holpen, and then take him forth: and mervey1 not that I write this medicine, because the earth is our mother, and that which purifieth all things, as we see by experience that the earth taketh forth all spots in cloth, it susteineth and maketh flesh tender if we bury it v or vi hours in the earth." Or "the water of the sea hath a marveylous remedy in it against the pestilence, if they wash them therein iiii or v houres togither, or if need require let him stand x or xii houres therein." Truly a man would be well "holpen" by such remedies: yet this Fioraventi, a Bolognese physician and alchemist of the sixteenth century, enjoyed considerable reputation among his contemporaries. The chemists of course were not sparing in their censures of their adversaries the Galenists, and the ingenious and industrious Iatrochemist, Dr. George Thomson, makes the following observations, in which the reader may be inclined partly to join: "These, especially if they can but surreptitiously get some chymical medicines from us, will, at a hazard, try what a dry fume of gums will do, a costly pomander, a composition of figs, rue, and walnuts (a rueful medicine to trust to if all were known), Mathias' plague water, or aqua epidemica (I wonder they forgat St. Luke's water for mere credit's sake), an electuary of London treacle and wood-sorrel (I am persuaded a leg of veal and green-sauce is far better), bole-armeniac (no whit

better than tobacco-clay, except that-tis dearer and farther fetched). If these avail not, if they light upon rich families (let the poor shift for themselves), they will provide for them (taking a share with them) pearls, hyacinth-stone prepared (after their gross way), bezoar-stone of the east, unicorn's horn (equivalent to hartshorn), lignum aloes—strange they omitted gold, but that I believe they mean to put into their own purse*." The ridicule is not undeserved, when we find such articles as crab's eyes, julap of violets, oil of amber, confection of hyacinth, and other preparations of precious stones in the materia medica of the day. Dr. Thomson, however, has his own 'Ternion of effectual Chymical Remedies,' with which "noble chymical preparations if any desire to be accommodated in this sad time of contagion, let them repair to the place of his abode without Aldgate, nigh the Blew-Boare Inn." Spirit of salt and oil of sulphur appear to have been favourite remedies with this class of practitioners.

The greatest, and last plague which has appeared in London, first showed itself in Westminster towards the end of the year 1664. In December a three months' frost set in, which stopped its progress, but with the spring it returned, though doubtfully, and continued through May and June with more or less severity. At the beginning of August it set in with far greater violence, and was at its height about the beginning of September, when more than twelve thousand persons died weekly. Having reached this height, it began to decrease. By the beginning of November the city began to wear a more healthy aspect; and in December, people were crowding back

* Loimologia: a consolatory advice and some brief observations concerning the present air. By George Thomson, Dr. of Physick. 1665.

again as fast as they before had crowded out*. The total number of deaths is thus given:—

Within the City of London . . .	9887
In Westminster	8403
Parishes without the Walls . . .	28888
Neighbourhood, including Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Rotherhithe, &c., in all 12 parishes . . .	21420
	68598

Enough has been already said of the general appearance and course of such disorders. Instead therefore of another connected narrative, we shall only extract some of the most remarkable incidents and reflections to be found in Defoe's and Pepys's journals.

"The face of London was now indeed strangely altered, I mean the whole mass of buildings, city, liberties, suburbs, Westminster, Southwark, and altogether; for as to the particular part called the city, or within the walls, that was not yet much infected; but in the whole, the face of things, I say, was much altered: sorrow and sadness sat upon every face, and though some part were not overwhelmed, yet all looked deeply concerned; and as we saw it apparently coming on, so every one looked on himself and his family as in the utmost danger: were it possible to represent those times exactly to those that did not see them, and give the reader due ideas of the horror that every where presented itself, it must make just impressions upon their minds, and fill them with surprise. London might well be said to be all in tears: the mourners did not go about the streets indeed, for nobody put on black, or made a formal dress of mourning for their nearest friends;

* Loimologia, or an Historical account of the Plague in London. By Nath. Hodges, M.D.

but the voice of mourning was truly heard in the streets; the shrieks of women and children at the windows and doors of their houses, where their nearest relations were perhaps dying, or just dead, were so frequent to be heard as we passed the streets, that it was enough to pierce the stoutest heart in the world to hear them. Tears and lamentations were seen almost in every house, especially in the first part of the visitation, for towards the latter end, men's hearts were hardened, and death was always so much before their eyes, that they did not so much concern themselves for the loss of their friends, expecting that they themselves should be summoned the next hour*."

"At the beginning of this surprising time, while the fears of the people were young, they were increased strangely by several odd accidents, which put altogether, it was really a wonder the whole body of the people did not rise as one man, and abandon their dwellings, leaving the place as a space of ground, designed by Heaven for an Akeldama, doomed to be destroyed from the face of the earth, and that all that would be found in it would perish with it. I shall name but a few of these things; but sure they were so many, and so many wizards and cunning people propagating them, that I have often wondered there was any (women especially) left behind.

"In the first place, a blazing star or comet appeared for several months before the plague, as there did, the year after, another, a little before the fire; the old women, and the phlegmatic hypochondriacal part of the other sex, whom I could almost call old women too, remarked, especially afterwards, though not till both those judgments were over, that those two comets passed directly over the city, and that so very near the houses, that it was plain they imported something

* Defoe, p. 24, 25.

peculiar to the city alone, that the comet before the pestilence was of a faint, dull, languid colour, and its motion very heavy, solemn, and slow, but that the comet before the fire was bright and sparkling, or, as others said, flaming, and its motion swift and furious, and that accordingly one foretold a heavy judgment, slow but severe, terrible and frightful, as was the plague. But the other foretold a stroke, sudden, swift, and fiery, as was the conflagration, nay, so particular some people were, that as they looked upon that comet preceding the fire, they fancied that they not only saw it pass swiftly and fiercely, and could perceive the motion with their eye, but even they heard it, that it made a rushing mighty noise, fierce and terrible, though at a distance, and but just perceivable.



Medallion commemorating the plague and fire of London. It represents the city of London in the centre, with fire to the west, on one hand, and the Thames flowing down past the open city. On the other side the city is represented in flames, while an angel with wings, the arms of London, flies over the waves, and in the other hand a withered tree. Death fighting with a man on horseback. The reverse of this curious piece, the history of which, when and by whom it was struck, is we believe unknown, is given in [illegible] Some Remarks.'

"I saw both these stars, and I must confess, had had so much of the common notion of such things in

my head, that I was apt to look upon them as the forerunners and warnings of God's judgments, and especially, when the plague had followed the first, I yet saw another of the like kind, I could not but say, God had not yet sufficiently scourged the city.

"The apprehensions of the people were likewise strangely increased by the error of the times, in which I think the people, from what principle I cannot imagine, were more addicted to prophecies and astrological conjurations, dreams, and old wives' tales, than ever they were before or since. Whether this unhappy temper was originally raised by the follies of some people who got money by it, that is to say, by printing predictions and prognostications, I know not: but certain it is, books frightened them terribly, such as Lily's Almanac, Gadbury's Astrological Predictions, Poor Robin's Almanac, and the like; also several pretended religious books, one entitled, 'Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partaker of her Plagues;' another called, 'Fair Warning;' another, 'Britain's Remembrancer,' and many such; all or most part of which foretold, directly or covertly, the ruin of the city. Nay, some were so enthusiastically bold as to run about the streets with their oral predictions, pretending they were sent to preach to the city; and one in particular, who, like Jonah to Nineveh, cried in the streets, 'Yet forty days, and London shall be destroyed.' I will not be positive whether he said 'yet forty days,' or 'yet a few days*.' Another ran about naked, except a pair of drawers about his waist, cry-

* This is a remarkable instance of that air of minute attention to fidelity, which gives such a remarkable air of reality even to those works of Defoe which are altogether fictitious. Though aware that the history of the plague is not to be taken as the record of his own adventures during it, it is hardly possible not to believe that he had been a hearer of the denunciation, which he is so careful not to report inaccurately.

ing day and night, like a man that Josephus mentions, who cried, 'Woe to Jerusalem!' a little before the destruction of that city. So this poor naked creature cried, 'O! the great and the dreadful God!' and said no more, but repeated those words continually, with a voice and countenance full of horror, a swift pace, and nobody could ever find him to stop, or rest, or take any sustenance, at least that I could hear of. I met this poor creature several times in the streets, and would have spoken to him, but he would not enter into speech with me, or any one else, but kept on his dismal cries continually. These things terrified the people to the last degree; and especially when two or three times, as I have mentioned already, they found one or two in the bills dead of the plague at St. Giles's*."

Pepys. June 7—"The hottest day that ever I felt in my life. This day, much against my will, I did see in Drury-lane two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there, which was a sad sight to me, being the first of that kind that to my remembrance I ever saw."

June 17—"It struck me very deep this afternoon, going with a hackney-coach down Holborn, from the Lord Treasurer's: the coachman I found to drive easily and easily, at last stood still, and came down hardly able to stand, and told me he was suddenly struck very sick, and almost blind, he could not see: so I light, and went into another coach with a sad heart for the poor man, and for myself also, lest he should have been struck with the plague."

Defoe. "I went all the first part of the time freely about the streets, though not so freely as to run myself into apparent danger, except when they dug the great pit in the church-yard of our parish of Ald-

* Defoe, p. 28, 32.

gate. A terrible pit it was, and I could not resist my curiosity to go and see it; as near as I may judge, it was about forty feet in length, and about fifteen or sixteen feet broad; and at the time I first looked at it, about nine feet deep: but it was said they dug it near twenty feet deep afterwards, in one part of it, till they could go no deeper for the water; for they had, it seems, dug several large pits before this; for though the plague was long a coming to our parish, yet when it did come, there was no parish in or about London where it raged with such violence as in the parishes of Aldgate and Whitechapel.

"It was about the 10th of September that my curiosity led, or rather drove me to go and see this pit again, when there had been near four hundred people buried in it; and I was not content to see it in the day time, as I had done before, for then there would have been nothing to have seen but the loose earth; for all the bodies that were thrown in were immediately covered with earth by those they called the buriers, which at other times were called bearers; but I resolved to go in the night, and see some of them thrown in. There was a strict order to prevent people coming to those pits, and that was only to prevent infection; but after some time that order was more necessary, for people that were infected, and near their end, and delirious also, would run to those pits wrapt in blankets, or rugs, and throw themselves in, and, as they said, bury themselves. I got admittance into the churchyard by being acquainted with the sexton who attended, who, though he did not refuse me at all, yet earnestly persuaded me not to go; telling me very seriously, for he was a good religious and sensible man, that it was indeed their business and duty to venture and to run all hazards, and that in it they might hope to be preserved; but that I had no ap-

parent call to it but my own curiosity, which, he said, he believed I would not pretend was sufficient to justify my running that hazard. I told him I had been pressed in my mind to go, and that perhaps it might be an instructing sight, and one that would not be without its uses. 'Nay,' said the good man, 'if you will venture upon that score, name of God go in, for, depend upon it, it will be a sermon to you, it may be the best you ever heard in your life. It is a speaking sight,' said he, 'and has a voice with it, and a loud one, to call us all to repentance;' and with that he opened the door, and said, 'Go if you will.'

"His discourse had shocked my resolution a little, and I stood wavering for a good while, but just at that interval I saw two links come over from the end of the Minories, and heard the bellman, and then appeared a dead-cart, as they called it, coming over the streets, so I could no longer resist my desire of seeing it, and went in.... It had in it sixteen or seventeen bodies, some were wrapt up in linen sheets, some in rugs, some little other than naked, or so loose that what covering they had fell from them in the shooting out of the cart, and they fell quite naked amongst the rest; but the matter was not much to them, nor the indecency to any one else, seeing they were all dead, and were to be huddled together into the common grave of mankind, as we may call it, for here was no difference made, but poor and rich went together; there was no other way of burials, neither was it possible there should, for coffins were not to be had for the prodigious numbers that fell in such a calamity as this.

"It was reported, by way of scandal upon the buriers, that if any corpse was delivered to them, decently wound up, as we called it then, in a winding sheet, tied over the head and feet, which some did, and which was generally of good linen—I say it was reported that the buriers were so wicked as to strip them in the

cart, and carry them quite naked to the ground; but as I cannot credit any thing so vile among christians, and at a time so filled with terrors as that was, I can only relate it, and leave it undetermined.

"Innumerable stories also went about of the cruel behaviour and practice of nurses who attended the sick, and of their hastening on the fate of those they attended in their sickness*.... It is to be observed, that the women were in all this calamity the most rash, fearless, and desperate creatures, and as there were vast numbers that went about as nurses to tend those that were sick, they committed a great many petty thieveries in the houses where they were employed, and some of them were publicly whipped for it, when perhaps they ought rather to have been hanged for examples, for numbers of houses were robbed on these occasions; till at length the parish officers were sent to recommend nurses to the sick, and always took an account of who it was they sent, so as that they might call them to account, if the house had been abused where they were placed. But these robberies extended chiefly to wearing clothes, linen, and what rings or money they could come at, when the person died who was under their care, but not to a general plunder of the houses; and I could give you an account of one of these nurses, who, several years after, being on her death-bed, confessed with the utmost horror the robberies she had committed at the time of her being a nurse, and by which she had enriched herself to a great degree; but as for murders, I do not find that there ever was any proof of the facts, in the manner as it has been reported, except as above. They did tell me indeed of a nurse in one place that laid a wet cloth on the face of a dying patient whom she tended, and so put an end to his life, who was just expiring before; and another that smothered a young woman

* P. 73, 85.

she was looking to when she was in a fainting fit, and would have come to herself; some that killed them by giving them one thing, some another, and some starved them by giving them nothing at all. But these stories had two marks of suspicion that always attended them, which caused me always to slight them, and to look upon them as mere stories that people continually frighted each other with. That, wherever it was that we heard it, they always placed the scene at the further end of the town, opposite or most remote from where you were to hear it. In the next place, of whatsoever part you heard the story, the particulars were always the same, especially that of laying a wet double clout on a dying man's face, and that of smothering a young gentlewoman, so that it was apparent, at least to my judgment, that there was more of tale than of truth in those things*."

"I had some little obligations upon me to go to my brother's house, which was in Coleman-street parish, and which he had left to my care, and I went at first every day, but afterwards only once or twice a week.

"In these walks I had many dismal scenes before my eyes; as particularly of persons falling dead in the streets, terrible shrieks and screechings of women, who in their agonies would throw open their chamber windows, and cry out in a dismal surprising manner. It is impossible to describe the variety of postures in which the passions of the poor people would express themselves.

"Passing through Tokenhouse-yard, in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, 'Oh! death, death, death!' in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other win-

* P. 110, 112.

dow open, for people had no curiosity now in any case; nor could any body help one another; so I went on to pass into Bell-alley.

"Just in Bell-alley, on the right hand of the passage, there was a more terrible cry than that, though it was not so directed out at the window, but the whole family was in a terrible fright, and I could hear women and children run screaming about the rooms like distracted, when a garret-window opened, and somebody from a window the other side the alley called and asked, 'What is the matter.' Upon which, from the first window it was answered, 'O Lord! my old master has hanged himself.' The other asked again, 'Is he quite dead?' and the first answered, 'Ay, ay, dead and cold.' This person was a merchant and a deputy-alderman, and very rich. I care not to mention his name, though I knew his name too, but that would be a hardship to the family, which is now flourishing again.

"But this is but one. It is scarce credible what dreadful cases happened in particular families every day: people in the rage of the distemper, or in the torment of their swellings, which was indeed intolerable, running out of their own government, raving and distracted, and oftentimes laying violent hands upon themselves, throwing themselves out at their windows, shooting themselves, &c.; mothers murdering their own children in their lunacy; some dying of mere grief, as a passion; some of mere fright and surprise, without any infection at all; others frighted into idiotism and foolish distractions; some into despair and lunacy; others into melancholy madness.

"The pain of the swelling was in particular very violent, and to some intolerable; the physicians and surgeons may be said to have tortured many poor creatures, even to death. The swellings in some grew hard, and they applied violent drawing plasters or

poultices to break them; and if these did not do, they cut and scarified them in a terrible manner. In some those swellings were made hard, partly by the force of the distemper, and partly by their being too violently drawn, and were so hard that no instrument could cut them; and then they burnt them with caustics, so that many died raving mad with the torment, and some in the very operation. In these distresses, some for want of help to hold them down in their beds, or to look to them, laid hands upon themselves as above; some broke out into the streets, perhaps naked, and would run directly down to the river, if they were not stopped by the watchmen or other officers, and plunge themselves into the water, wherever they found it*."

"One of the worst days we had in the whole time, as I thought, was in the beginning of September, when indeed good people were beginning to think that God was resolved to make a full end of the people in this miserable city. This was at that time when the plague was fully come into the eastern parishes. The parish of Aldgate, if I may give my opinion, buried above 1000 a week for two weeks, though the bills did not say so many; but it surrounded me at so dismal a rate, that there was not a house in twenty uninfected. In the Minories, in Houndsditch, and in those parts of Aldgate parish about the Butcher-row, and the alleys over against me, I say in those places death reigned in every corner. Whitechapel parish was in the same condition, and though much less than the parish I lived in, yet buried near 600 a week, by the bills; and in my opinion near twice as many. Whole families, and indeed whole streets of families, were swept away together, insomuch as it was frequent for neighbours to call to the bell-man to go to

* P. 105, 108.

such and such houses and fetch out the people, for that they were all dead.

"And indeed the work of removing the dead bodies by carts was now grown so very odious and dangerous, that it was complained of that the bearers did not take care to clear such houses, where all the inhabitants were dead, but that some of the bodies lay unburied, till the neighbouring families were offended with the stench, and consequently infected. And this neglect of the officers was such, that the churchwardens and constables were summoned to look after it, and even the justices of the Hamlets were obliged to venture their lives among them to quicken and encourage them; for innumerable of the bearers died of the distemper, infected by the bodies they were obliged to come so near; and had it had not been that the number of people who wanted employment, and wanted bread, as I have said before, was so great that necessity drove them to undertake any thing, and venture any thing, they would never have found people to be employed, and then the bodies of the dead would have lain above ground, and have perished and rotted in a dreadful manner.

"But the magistrates cannot be enough commended in this, that they kept such good order for the burying of the dead, that as fast as any of those they employed to carry off or bury the dead fell sick and died, as was many times the case, they immediately supplied the places with others, which, by reason of the great number of poor that was left out of business, was not hard to do. This occasioned that notwithstanding the infinite number of people which died, and were sick, almost all together, yet they were always cleared away and carried off every night, so that it was never to be said of London that the living were not able to bury the dead.

"As the desolation was greater during those terrible times, so the amazement of the people increased, and a thousand unaccountable things they would do in the violence of their fright, as others did the same in the agonies of their distemper, and this part was very affecting: some went roaring and crying, and wringing of their hands along the streets; some would go praying, and lifting up their hands to heaven, calling upon God for mercy. I cannot say, indeed, whether this was not in their distraction; but be it so, it was still an indication of a more serious mind, when they had the use of their senses, and was much better, even as it was, than the frightful yellings and cryings that every day, and especially in the evenings, were heard in some streets. I suppose the world has heard of the famous Solomon Eagle, an enthusiast: he, though not infected at all but in his head, went about denouncing of judgment upon the city in a frightful manner, sometimes quite naked, and with a pan of burning charcoal on his head. What he said, or pretended indeed, I could not learn.

"I will not say whether that clergyman was distracted or not, or whether he did it out of pure zeal for the poor people, who went every evening through the streets of Whitechapel, and with his hands lifted up, repeated that part of the liturgy of the church continually, 'Spare us, good Lord; spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood.' I say I cannot speak positively of these things, because these were only the dismal objects which represented themselves to me as I looked through my chamber windows, for I seldom opened the casements, while I confined myself within doors during that most violent raging of the pestilence; when indeed many began to think, and even to say, that there would none escape; and indeed I began

to think so too, and therefore kept within doors for about a fortnight, and never stirred out. But I could not hold it. Besides there were some people who, notwithstanding the danger, did not omit publicly to attend the worship of God, even in the most dangerous times And though it is true that a great many of the clergy did shut up their churches and fled, as other people did, for the safety of their lives, yet all did not do so, some ventured to officiate, and to keep up the assemblies of the people by constant prayers, and sometimes sermons, or brief exhortations to repentance and reformation, and this as long as they would hear them. And dissenters did the like also, and even in the very churches, where the parish ministers were either dead or fled, nor was there any room for making any difference at such a time as this was*.



Reverse of the medal given in p 89 Here every thing is prosperous a corn field on the one side a vineyard on the other in front are ships sailing in quiet, and the withered tree has put forth leaves The figure in front by the parent about his arm, seems meant for St Paul It general 'Mere goodness'

PEPYS, Sept 3.—Lord's day —"Up and put on my silk coloured suit, very fine, and my periwig, bought

* P 131, 135

a good while since, but durst not wear, because the plague was in Westminster when I bought it; and it is a wonder what will be the fashion after the plague is done as to periwigs, for nobody will dare to buy any hair for fear of the infection, that it had been cut off the heads of people dead of the plague."

It would be a great shame to laugh at Mr. Pepys, after he has done so much to amuse the world: but these, and such as these, are the most curious and important particulars concerning the pestilence recorded in his minute and extensive diary.



Medal struck after the siege of Ostend

CHAPTER III

Siege of Platæa—Numantia—Tyre—Syracuse—Instances of circumvallation—Siege of Jerusalem—Of La Rochelle—Effects of the invention of gunpowder—Siege of Ostend—Magdeburg—Character of the armies and troops of the seventeenth century—Siege of Lucca

THE cautious policy of Pericles, and the plague, combined to render the two first years of the war barren of incidents. The third campaign opened more energetically with the siege of Platæa, the old and faithful ally of Athens. This is the earliest siege of which we have any full and particular account; and some surprise may be felt at the rudeness and inefficacy of the means employed in prosecuting it

by the most military nation of Greece. For this, however, all previous history prepares us. To the early Greeks fortifications of any strength appear to have presented insuperable obstacles. Not a city of any note can be mentioned which was taken by fair fighting. Troy was impregnable by force. Eira was taken in consequence of its being accidentally left unguarded*. Ithome held out for ten years, and at last obtained honourable terms of surrender. And when Cyrus marched against Babylon, the inhabitants, trusting in their walls and their magazines, "made no account at all of being besieged; but Cyrus became greatly puzzled what to do, having spent much time there and made no progress at all†." The stratagem by which he took it at last is well known: he laid dry the bed of the Euphrates, and introduced a body of troops through the deserted channel; yet danger, even from this quarter, had been foreseen and guarded against, if proper caution had been used. Each side of the river was lined with walls, and gates were placed at the end of the streets which led down to the water side; so that, as Herodotus himself remarks, if the Persians had been on their guard the attempt might have been defeated by merely closing the gates, and the assailants might have been cut off entirely by missile weapons. But, to return to Platæa, the Spartans were notoriously unskilled, even among the Greeks, in this branch of warfare. Military engines they had none; a want arising probably from their national poverty; for the ram was known, and was employed, some say invented, by Pericles, at the siege of Samos, some years before the Peloponnesian war broke out. It is remarkable that from this time downwards to the invention of gunpowder no material discovery was made in this branch of the military art, except the

* Vol. i p. 49. † Herod. i. 190.

introduction of moving towers. Lines of circumvallation, as they were the earliest, continued to be the surest means of overcoming the pertinacious resistance of stone and mortar. Such was the case even at Rome, after the vast influx of wealth from conquered provinces had facilitated the construction of the largest and most expensive machines; and the vast scale upon which those temporary inclosures were completed, exhibit most strikingly the laboriousness of the Roman legionaries. This, however, is foreign to our present subject. If the reader has any curiosity respecting these works he will find some remarkable ones described in Cæsar's Commentaries*.

Just before war broke out between Athens and Sparta, the Thebans, always jealous of Athens, and more especially envious of its strict connection with Platæa, over which, as the head of the Bœotian confederacy, they claimed the same undefined but oppressive authority, which was exercised by the Athenians and other leading cities over their allies, made an attempt to gain possession of Platæa, in concert with a party within its walls, consisting of citizens dissatisfied with the existing government. By the contrivance of the latter a body of Theban troops was introduced by night, who, without a struggle, became, to all appearance, masters of the town, piled their arms in the market-place, and invited the inhabitants to place themselves under the protection of Thebes. But the Athenian party was greatly preponderant, and discovering the small number of their enemies they took courage and assaulted them. Almost all the Thebans were made prisoners, and

* See the siege of Alesia, vii. 72, or the circumvallation of Pompey at Dyrrachium, by Cæsar's army, Bell. Civ. iii. 42. The lines of Torres Vedras, drawn by the British in the Peninsular war, may however compete, for their extent and the labour bestowed on them, with any of these ancient works.

subsequently put to death, in contravention of a promise of personal security implied, if not absolutely expressed in words. Immediate notice of what had occurred was sent to the Athenians, who, considering this as the commencement of war, removed the women, and children, and all who were unfit for military duty, from Platæa, sending thither eighty of their own citizens to increase the garrison, and also probably to guard against any further attempts on the part of the disaffected.

No disturbance was given to Platæa during the two first years of the war. At the commencement of the third, Archidamus, the Spartan king and general, finding that the annual devastation of Attica was of no service to the Peloponnesian confederacy, and unwilling perhaps to incur the hazard of entering an infected country, marched to Platæa, which, in consequence of its exertions in the Persian war, had been invested by the general consent of Greece with privileges of an almost sacred character. The nature of these privileges, and the singular proposal to which they gave rise, will be best understood from the narration of Thucydides.

"The next summer the Peloponnesians and their confederates came not into Attica, but turned their arms against Platæa, led by Archidamus, the son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Lacedæmonians, who, having pitched his camp, was about to waste the territory thereof. But the Platæans sent ambassadors presently unto him, with words to this effect: 'Archidamus, and you Lacedæmonians, you do neither justly, nor worthy yourselves and ancestors, in making war upon Platæa. For Pausanias of Lacedæmon, the son of Cleombrotus, having (together with such Grecians as were content to undergo the danger of the battle that was fought in this our territory) delivered all Greece from the slavery of the Persians, when he offered sacrifice in the market-place of

Platæa to Jupiter the deliverer, called together all the confederates, and granted to the Platæans this privilege, that their city and territory should be free: that none should make unjust war against them, nor go about to enslave them, and if any did, the confederates then present should use their utmost ability to revenge their quarrel* These privileges your fathers granted us for our valour and zeal in those dangers But now do you the clean contrary, for you join with our greatest enemies, the Thebans, to bring us into subjection. Therefore calling to witness the gods then sworn by, and the gods peculiar to your ancestral descent, and our own local gods, we require you, that you do no damage to the territory of Platæa, nor violate those oaths, but that you suffer us to enjoy our liberty in such sort as was allowed us by Pausanias†

* After the battle of Platæa, the Athenians and Lacedæmonians contending for the *aristeia*, or prize for having behaved best in the battle, that honour, by the mediation of the Corinthians, was conferred on the Platæans, whose steadiness throughout the Persian war was alluded to, in all hands, to deserve such a distinction At the same time a yearly sacrifice was appointed to be held at Platæa in honour of the slain, and a sort of sacred character was conferred both on the Platæans and their territory, with the privileges here enumerated

† Dr Arnold observes that this is a good instance of that feature of Greek polytheism, by which the gods were known and honoured as standing in particular relation to mankind, not as the general moral governors of the world Three classes of gods were here invoked, each as having a special point of honour involved in the observation of the oaths here mentioned, those whose names were pledged to the observance of it, and who would be personally affronted by its violation, the ancestral gods (θεοὶ πατρῷοι) of the Lacedæmonians who would take it ill that the act of their descendants Pausanias, should be disregarded, or the tombs of the Lacedæmonians at Platæa neglected or profaned, and the local gods (θεοὶ ἐγχώριοι) to whom the territory was as a home and who must expect to be denied their worship, if their country should be occupied by strangers, who would bring their own gods along with them

"The Platæans having thus said, Archidamus replied, and said thus: 'Men of Platæa, if you would do as ye say, you say what is just. For as Pausanias hath granted to you, so also be you free; and help to set free the rest, who having been partakers of the same dangers then, and being comprised in the same oath with yourselves, are now brought into subjection by the Athenians. And this so great preparation and war is only for the deliverance of them and others; of which, if you will especially participate, keep your oaths; at least (as we have also advised you formerly) be quiet, and enjoy your own, in neutrality, receiving both sides in the way of friendship, neither side in the way of faction. And these things will content us.' Thus said Archidamus. And the ambassadors of Platæa, when they heard him, returned to the city; and having communicated his answer to the people, brought word again to Archidamus, 'That what he had advised was impossible for them to perform, without leave of the Athenians, in whose keeping were their wives and children: and that they feared also for the whole city, lest when the Lacedæmonians were gone the Athenians should come and take the custody of it out of their hands; or that the Thebans, as being comprehended in the oath that they would admit both parties, should again attempt to surprise it.' But Archidamus, to encourage them, made this answer: 'Deliver you unto us Lacedæmonians your city and your houses; show us the bounds of your territory; give us your trees by tale, and whatsoever else can be numbered; and depart yourselves, whither you shall think good, as long as the war lasteth. And when it shall be ended we will deliver it all unto you again: in the mean time we will keep these things as deposited, and will cultivate your ground, and

pay you rent for it, as much as shall suffice for your maintenance.'

"Hereupon the ambassadors went again into the city, and having consulted with the people, made answer: 'That they would first acquaint the Athenians with it, and if they would consent they would then accept the condition; till then they desired a suspension of arms, and not to have their territory wasted.' Upon this he granted them so many days' truce as was requisite for their return, and for so long forbore to waste their territory. When the Platæan ambassadors were arrived at Athens, and had advised on the matter with the Athenians, they returned to the city with this answer: 'The Athenians say, that neither in former times, since we were their confederates, did they ever abandon us to the injury of any, nor will they now neglect us, but give us their utmost assistance; and they conjure us, by the oath of our fathers, not to make any alienation touching the league.'

"When the ambassadors had made this report, the Platæans resolved in their councils not to betray the Athenians, but rather to endure, if it must be, the wasting of their territory before their eyes, and to suffer whatsoever misery could befal them; and no more to go forth, but from the walls to make them this answer: 'That it was impossible for them to do as the Lacedæmonians had required.' When they had answered so, Archidamus the king first made a protestation to the gods and heroes of the country, saying thus: 'All ye gods and heroes, protectors of the land of Platæa, be witnesses that we neither invade this territory, wherein our fathers, after their vows unto you, overcame the Medes, and which you made propitious for the Grecians to fight in, unjustly now in the beginning, because they have first broken

the league they had sworn; nor what we shall further do will be any injury, because though we have offered many and reasonable conditions, they have yet been all refused. Assent yet also to the punishment of the beginners of injury, and to the revenge of those that bear lawful arms.'

"Having made this protestation to the gods, he made ready his army for the war. And first having felled trees, he therewith made a palisado about the town that none might go out. That done, they raised a mount against the wall, hoping with so great an army all at work at once, to have quickly taken it. And, having cut down timber in the mountain Cithæron, they built a frame of timber and wattled it about on either side, to serve instead of wall, to keep the earth from falling too much away, and cast into it stones and earth, and whatsoever else would serve to fill it up. Seventy days and nights continually they cast up the mound, dividing the work between them for rest in such manner, as some might be carrying whilst others took their sleep and food. And they were urged to labour by the Lacedæmonian officers, who commanded severally the contingents of the allied cities. The Platæans seeing the mount to rise, made the frame of a wall with wood, which, having placed on the wall of the city in the place where the mount touched, they built it within full of bricks, taken from the adjoining houses, for that purpose demolished; the timbers serving to bind them together, that the building might not be weakened by the height. The same was also covered with skins and leather, both to keep the timber from shot of wildfire and those that wrought from danger. So that the height of the wall was great on one side, and the mount went up as fast on the other. The Platæans used also this device: they brake a hole in

their own wall, where the mount joined, and drew the earth from it into the city. But the Peloponnesians, when they found it out, rammed clay into cases made of reeds, which they cast into the cavity, with intention that the mound should not moulder, and be carried away like loose earth. The Platæans, excluded here, gave over that plot, and digging a secret mine, which they carried under the mount from within the city by conjecture, fetched away the earth again, and were a long time undiscovered; so that the earth being continually carried out below, it was no use to cast fresh stuff on the mound, which still settled down into the excavation. Nevertheless, fearing that they should not be able even thus to hold out, being few against many, they devised this further: they gave over working at the high wall against the mount, and beginning at both ends of it, where the wall was low, built another wall in form of a crescent, inward to the city, that, if the great wall were taken, this might resist, and put the enemy to make another mount, in the continuing of which further inwards they should have their labour over again, and withal should be more exposed on either side to missile weapons. And at the same time that they were raising the mount, the Peloponnesians brought to the city their engines of battery; one of which, by help of the mount, they applied to the high wall, wherewith they much shook it, and put the Platæans into great fear; and others to other parts of the wall, which the Platæans broke partly by casting ropes about them, and partly with great beams, which being hung in long iron chains by either end upon two other great beams jetting over, and inclining from above the wall like to horns, they drew up to them in a horizontal position, and when the engine was about to make a blow any where, they let go the

chains and let the beam fall, which, by the violence of its descent, broke off the head of the battering-ram.

"After this, the Peloponnesians, seeing their engines availed not, and thinking it hard to take the city by any present violence, prepared themselves to draw an enclosure all around it. But first they thought fit to attempt it by fire, being no great city, and when the wind should rise, if they could, to burn it; for there was no way they did not think on, to have gained it without expense and long siege. Having therefore brought faggots, they cast them from the mount into the space between it and their new wall, which by so many hands was quickly filled; and then into as much of the rest of the city as at that distance they could reach; and throwing amongst them fire, together with brimstone and pitch, kindled the wood, and raised such a flame, as the like was never seen before, made by the hand of man. For it has been known that a forest in the mountains has taken fire* spontaneously from the friction of its boughs in a high wind, and burst into flames. But this fire was a great one, and the Platæans, that had escaped other mischiefs, wanted little of being consumed by this; for there was a large part of the town within which it was impossible to approach; and if the wind had blown the fire that way (as the enemy hoped it might) they could never have escaped. It is also reported that there fell much rain then, with great thunder, and that the flame was extinguished and the danger ceased by that.

"Now the Peloponnesians, when they failed likewise of this, retaining a part of their army, and dismissing the rest, enclosed the city about with a wall, dividing the circumference thereof to the charge of the several cities. There was a ditch both within

* Such a *natural* fire, therefore, may have been still greater.

and without it, out of which they made their bricks; and after it was finished, which was about the rising of Arcturus*, they left a guard for one-half of the wall (for the other was guarded by the Bœotians), and departed with the rest of their army, and were dissolved according to their cities. The Platæans had before this sent their wives and children, and all their unserviceable men to Athens. The rest were besieged, being in number, of the Platæans themselves four hundred, of Athenians eighty, and one hundred and ten women to dress their meat. These were all when the siege was first laid, and not more, neither free nor bond, in the city. In this manner were the Platæans besieged †."

The blockade continued for about a year and a half, during which the historian does not advert to it. At the end of that time, in the winter, A. C. 428-7, the garrison, after deliberation, being pressed by hunger, and despairing of any help from Athens, resolved to abandon the city, and force a passage through the line of circumvallation. Half the number took alarm at the seeming rashness of the attempt, and declined to share it; but about two hundred and twenty persisted in their resolution. We now return to the historian's narrative:—

"As for the wall of the Peloponnesians, it was thus built: it consisted of a double circle, one towards Platæa, and another outward, in case of an assault from Athens. These two walls were distant one from the other about sixteen feet; and that sixteen feet of space between them was disposed and built into cabins for the force that kept the works which, were so joined and continued one to another, that

* That is, when the star begins to rise before the sun, and so first becomes visible in the morning. This in the case of Arcturus occurred about the middle of September.

† Thucyd. ii. 71, 78.

the whole appeared to be one thick wall, with battlements on either side. At every ten battlements stood a great tower of the same breadth as the walls, and stretching across them from the inner to the outer face, so that there was no passage by the side of a tower, but through the midst of it. And such nights as there happened any storm of rain, they used to quit the battlements of the wall, and to watch under the towers, as being not far asunder, and covered beside overhead. Such was the form of the wall wherein the Peloponnesians kept their watch.

"The Platæans, after they were ready, waiting for a tempestuous night of wind and rain, and withal moonless, went out of the city, and were conducted by those men who had proposed the attempt. And first they passed the ditch that was about the town, and then came up close to the wall of the enemy, who through the darkness could not see them coming, nor hear them for the clatter of the storm which drowned the noise of their approach. And they came on besides at a good distance one from the other, that they might not be betrayed by the clashing of their arms; and were but lightly armed, and not shod but on the left foot, for the more steadiness in the mud. They came thus to the battlements in one of the spaces between tower and tower, knowing that there was now no watch kept there. And first came they that carried the ladders, and placed them to the wall; then twelve lightly armed, only with a dagger and a breast-plate, went up, led by Ammeas, the son of Corœbus, who was the first that mounted; and after him ascended his followers, to each tower six. To these succeeded others lightly armed, that carried the darts, for whom they that came after carried targets at their backs, that they might be the more expedite to get up, which targets they were to deliver to them when they came to the enemy. At length,

when most of them were ascended, they were heard by the watchmen that were in the towers; for one of the Platæans, taking hold of the battlements, threw down a tile, which made a noise in the fall, and presently there was an alarm; and the army run to the wall, for in the dark and stormy night they knew not what the danger was. And the Platæans that were left in the city came forth withal, and assaulted the wall of the Peloponnesians on the opposite part to that where their men went over; so that they were all in a tumult in their several places, and not any of them that watched durst stir to the aid of the rest, nor were able to conjecture what had happened. But those three hundred * that were appointed to assist the watch upon all occasions of need, went without the wall, and made towards the place of the clamour. They also held up the fires by which they used to make known the approach of enemies, towards Thebes. But then the Platæans likewise held out many other fires from the wall of the city, which for that purpose they had before prepared, to confound the meaning of the enemy's signal-fires, and that the Thebans, apprehending the matter otherwise than it was, might forbear to send help till their men were over, and had recovered some place of safety.

"In the mean time those Platæans, which having scaled the wall first and slain the watch, were now masters of both the towers, not only guarded the passages by standing themselves in the entries, but also applying ladders from the wall to the towers, and conveying many men to the top, kept the enemies off with shot both from above and below. In the mean space the greatest number of them having reared to the wall many ladders at once, and beaten down the battlements, passed quite over between the towers,

* There is no mention of these three hundred where the author relateth the laying of siege; but it must be understood.

and ever as any of them got to the other side, they stood still upon the brink of the ditch, and with arrows and darts kept off those that came along the wall to hinder the passage of their companions. And when the rest were over, then last of all, and with much ado, came they also which were in the two towers down to the ditch. And by this time the three hundred, that were to assist the watch, came and set upon them, and had lights with them; by which means the Platæans that were on the further brink of the ditch discerned them the better from out of the dark, and aimed their arrows and darts at their most disarmed parts; for, standing in the dark, the light of the enemy made the Platæans the less discernible: insomuch as the last of them passed the ditch in time, though with difficulty and force; for the water in it was frozen over, though not so hard as to bear, but watery, and such as when the wind is at east rather than at north; and the snow which fell that night, together with so great a wind as there was, had very much increased the water, which they waded through with scarce their heads above. But yet the greatness of the storm was the principal means of their escape.

"From the ditch the Platæans in troop took the way towards Thebes, leaving on the right hand the shrine of the hero Androcrates, both for that they supposed it would be least suspected that they had taken the road leading to their enemies; and also because they saw the Peloponnesians with their lights pursue that way, which, by mount Cithæron and the Oakheads, led to Athens; and for six or seven furlongs the Platæans followed the road to Thebes; then turning off they took that towards the mountain leading to Erythræ and Hysiæ, and, having gotten the hills, escaped through to Athens, being two hundred and twelve persons out of a greater number: for some of them returned into the city

before the rest went over, and one of their archers was taken upon the ditch without. And so the Peloponnesians gave over the pursuit, and returned to their places. But the Platæans that were within the city, knowing nothing of the event, and those that turned back having told them that not a man escaped, as soon as it was day sent a herald to entreat a truce for the taking up of their dead bodies; but when they knew the truth, they gave it over. And thus these men of Platæa passed through the fortification of their enemies, and were saved*."

A bolder and more fortunate stroke for life and liberty has never been described. How deep must have been the mortification of those whose courage failed at the decisive moment, upon learning the brilliant success of their comrades' attempt! Dearly did they pay for disgracing their brave resistance by a single moment of timidity. Forced at last by famine to yield up the town, which the besiegers could at any time have taken by assault, but that they had an ulterior object in wishing to obtain it by surrender, the only terms they could obtain were, that they should surrender themselves and their city to the justice of Sparta, so that none but the guilty should be punished. Commissioners were sent out to try them. The only question asked was this: Had they done any service to the Lacedæmonians or their allies in the present war? The Platæans requested that instead of merely answering this question they might reply at length; and having obtained it, commissioned two persons to plead their cause. They set forth the peculiarly hard situation in which this mode of trial, if such it could be called, placed them; which, setting aside the justice of their cause, required them to pronounce their own certain condemnation. They reminded the hearers of their

* Thucyd. iii. 21—24.

services in the Persian war, of the privileges and immunities conferred on them by Pausanias and the Greeks, and the respect due to their territory, as the repository of the bones of those who fell in the great battle which for ever relieved Greece from the fear of Persia. They urged, that when they had sought alliance with Sparta, and protection against Thebes, the Spartans themselves had rejected their petition, and referred them to Athens; they suggested skilfully the high reputation of the Spartans for probity, and dwelt on the disgrace which they would incur, if, in a cause of such importance, they should commit injustice. But they pleaded in vain: the character which they ascribed to the Spartans, if ever deserved, was now deserved no longer, and their fate was predetermined. The question, Had they done any good to the Lacedemonians? was repeated to them one by one, and as it could not be answered in the affirmative, they were led off to execution to the number of 200 Platæans and twenty-five Athenians. Nor was this a single instance of barbarity, for it was the practice of the Spartans to put their prisoners to death, even the crews of such merchant ships as they captured; an example too readily followed by their antagonists. One, and but one, such action may be cited in modern times, the massacre of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa, the most hateful, and save one perhaps the most hated, of the remorseless actions of Napoleon. Yet for this there is some shadow of excuse, however insufficient to justify the deed to modern morals, in the broken parole of those who were put to death. To the Greeks such excuse would have been ample; nay, none such was required. Humanity has made no small progress, even in the midst of warfare. The town of Platæa was levelled with the ground by the Thebans *.

* Thucyd. iii. 52, 68.

Similar was the fate; similar, but even more obstinate and remarkable was the resistance of Numantia, the last stronghold of those gallant and generous Celtiberians, who, after the infamous murder of Viriatus, upheld the liberties of Spain against Rome. During five successive years, six Roman officers met with defeats, more or less signal, under its walls, and peace, twice offered and concluded by the unsuccessful generals to retrieve their safety, was as often disowned and violated by the unblushing perfidy of the senate. The circumstances of one of these treaties are so creditable to the *barbarian* Spaniards, as they were called by the Romans, that we will go somewhat out of the way to relate them.

The highest estimate of the Numantine force falls short of 10,000 men. C. Hostilius Mancinus, consul, A.U. 615, (B. C. 139,) succeeding to the command of 30,000 men employed in besieging them, found his army so dispirited by a long train of reverses, that he judged it best to retire to some distance from the town. He intended to effect this secretly by a night march, but the besieged, getting notice of his design, fell upon the Roman rear, killed 10,000, it is said, and surrounded the rest in such a manner that escape was hopeless. Anxious only for peace and independence, they readily accepted the terms offered by Mancinus as a ransom for his army. What these were does not appear, but they were sworn to by the consul and chief officers. Mancinus, on the first rumour of his defeat, was recalled to Rome, and deputies from Numantia accompanied him, to obtain the ratification of the treaty. But the haughty senate, as once before in the celebrated surrender at the Caudine Forks, refused to admit terms humiliating to the dignity of the republic, though not to profit by the release of their countrymen. The war was continued; but to satisfy their notions of equity Mancinus was given up

to the Numantines, a voluntary testimony, to do him justice, to his own good faith in the transaction. Returning to Spain with his successor, Furius, he was led naked to the waist, his hands tied behind him, to the gates of Numantia. But the Numantines refused to take vengeance on an innocent man; saying, that the breach of the public faith could not be expiated by the death of one person. Let the senate abide by the treaty, or deliver up those who have escaped under the shelter of it.

At first perfidy did not seem to prosper. Furius and his successor Calpurnius Piso made no more progress than their predecessors, and so high grew the reputation of the besieged for valour, that no one, Florus says, ever expected to see the back of a Numantine. At last, A. U. 619, the Romans, weary of the war, and anxious above all things to bring it to an end, re-elected to the office of consul Scipio Æmilianus, celebrated as the final conqueror and destroyer of Carthage, and expressly assigned Spain to him as his province, instead of suffering the two consuls to draw lots for the choice of provinces, as was the usual course. Scipio's first care was to restore discipline in his army, which he found corrupted by luxury. With this view he expelled all the idle and profligate followers of the camp; practised his troops in all military exercises, inured them to exposure and fatigue, and when he thought the ancient tone of Roman discipline was restored, led them, not against the formidable Numantines, but against a neighbouring people. Obtaining a trifling advantage over a party of the former who had attacked his foragers, he refused to prosecute it, thinking it enough that the reputed invincibility of the Numantines was disproved. On this occasion, says Plutarch, the Numantines being reproached on their return to the

city, for retiring before an enemy whom they had so often beaten, replied, "The Romans might indeed be the same sheep, but they had gotten a new shepherd."

In the ensuing winter, his army being increased to 60,000 men, Scipio determined to invest the town. Regardless of the disproportion of force, the besieged often offered battle, which he refused, preferring the slow work of fame to encountering the desperation of veteran and approved soldiers. With this view he proceeded to draw lines of circumvallation round the town; and it is said by Appian, that he was the first general who ever took that method of reducing a place, the garrison of which did not decline a battle in the open field. The town was about three miles in compass, and lay on the slope of a hill, at the foot of which ran the river Durius, now called the Douro. Around it Scipio traced a double ditch, six miles in circuit, with a rampart eight feet thick and ten feet high, not including a parapet strengthened by towers at intervals of 125 feet. The river, where it intersected the works, was effectually blocked up by chains and booms. The besieged often endeavoured to check the progress of the Romans, but the superiority of numbers, aided by restored discipline, was too much for them.

The blockade had lasted six months, and the Numantines were hard pressed by famine, before they condescended to inquire whether, if they surrendered, they would meet with honourable treatment. An unconditional surrender was required. Urged even to desperation, they still refused to consign themselves to slavery or mutilation, for the latter often was the fate of those whose strength and valour the Romans had found reason to respect. Rather than submit to such a fate, they consumed their arms and effects, and houses, in one general conflagration, and dying by the sword, or poison, or fire, left the

victor nothing of Numantia to adorn his triumph but the name*.

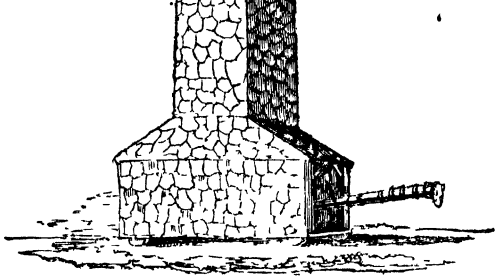
Such was the unworthy fate of a city, which had spared more Roman soldiers than itself could muster armed men. "Most brave," says the historian, "and, in my opinion, most happy in its very misfortunes! It asserted faithfully the cause of its allies; alone it resisted, for how long a time, a nation armed with the strength of the whole world †." It is an easy thing to write rhetorical flourishes, and very often mischievous as well as easy. Had Florus ever undergone one tithe of the sufferings inflicted on the miserable Numantines, we might possibly not have heard of their supreme felicity. It might have done him some good by quickening his moral sense, and might have prevented his beginning the next chapter with the assertion, that "hitherto the Roman people was excellent, pious, holy." Verily, such history as this is a profitable study!

In reading of such sieges as these, one of the first things which strikes a reader not familiar with ancient warfare, is the extreme rudeness of the methods employed, and the vast expense of time and labour; yet, compared with earlier times, even the siege of Platæa is of no extraordinary duration. Not to go back to the ten-year sieges of Troy and Eira,

* The end of Numantia is rather differently related by Appian, who says, that after being reduced to such extremity as to eat human flesh, they surrendered at discretion, and were sold as slaves; Scipio retaining fifty of them to grace his triumph. The desperate resolution of the Saguntines, also a Spanish people, confirms the probability of Florus's version. Pressed by Hannibal, the elders of the city collected the most valuable property, both public and private, into a pile, which they consumed by fire, and for the most part, threw themselves into the flames. The other male inhabitants slew their wives and children, set fire to their houses, and perished in them, or else fighting to the death.

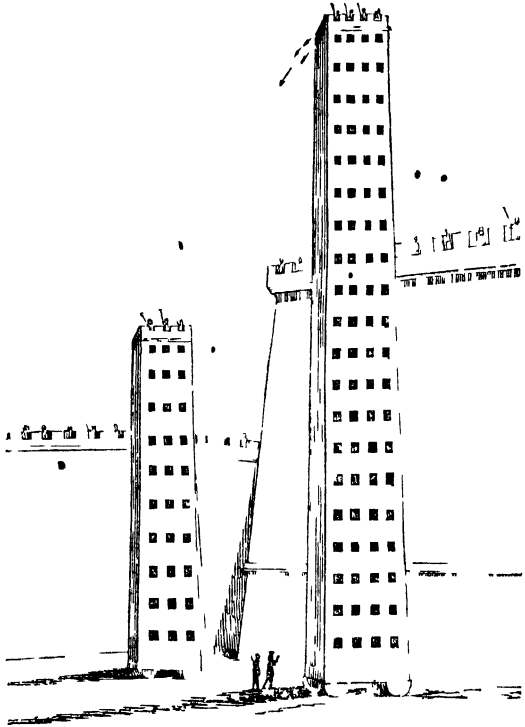
† Florus, II. c. 18.

the Messenians in Ithome held out against the Spartans during nine years; and, in the Peloponnesian war itself, Potidæa resisted for a still longer period than Platæa: such was the patience of a besieging army in waiting for the slow operation of hunger, or for some fortunate chance which, as at Eira, might give possession of the town at an unguarded moment. Before the battering-ram was invented, force could avail little against solid walls; and men soon found out, with Wamba, in Ivanhoe, that their hands were little fitted to make mammocks of stone and mortar. A well conducted escalade might succeed; a skilful stratagem might deceive the vigilance of the garrison; an ingenious general might devise some method of attack which should render walls useless, as in the attempt to burn out the Platæans, and might derive some advantage from natural facilities, or even from natural obstacles, so as to convert what the besieged most trusted in into the means of their destruction; but to overthrow or pass the walls by violence was commonly beyond his power. But the introduction of the ram worked a material change



Battering-ram, combined with tower, from Pompeii, vol. i. p. 78.

in the relative strength of the besiegers and besieged, for few walls could be found strong enough to bear the repeated application of its powerful shocks. Next in importance to the ram were those huge moving towers which overtopped walls, and were provided with drawbridges, by means of which, the battlements being previously cleared of their defenders by missile weapons from above, a body of troops might



Movable tower, from Pompeii vol. i. p. 80

at once be thrown upon them. Both of these inventions have been described at length in the first volume of Pompeii, chap. iv., from which we borrow two wood-cuts in illustration of the subject: it is unnecessary to repeat the explanations there given.

No material alteration in the methods of attack took place till the discovery of gunpowder gave force enough to projectiles to batter down the strongest walls, without exposing men and machinery to the hazard of close approach. The only improvements which did take place consisted in supplying means by which the assailants might approach with less danger to the foot of the walls, and there apply the powerful ram, or, in some instances, resort to mining. These means are briefly noticed in the volume above referred to.

In illustration of these remarks we may notice, very shortly, two of the most remarkable sieges in ancient history, those of Tyre and Syracuse, both resolutely sustained, both finally successful, both carried on by rich and powerful nations, who commanded every thing that the best skill of the engineer, or the labour of numbers, could effect. The first was undertaken by Alexander soon after the battle of Issus, B. C. 333. From past ages the Phœnicians had been celebrated among Asiatics for their maritime skill, and Tyre was the most powerful of the Phœnician cities. Trusting in their naval strength to obviate blockade and famine, and in the height of their walls, and strength of their situation to repel violence, the Tyrians refused admission to Alexander, remaining faithful to their engagements with Persia. Too weak at sea to assault the walls from his fleet, Alexander had no resource but to carry out a mole to the island. Near the walls there were three fathoms of water, which shoaled gradually to the shore. The mole was built of stone, heaped up, we may suppose, of rough uncemented

blocks, like the Plymouth breakwater, and strengthened with piles; and the top was constructed entirely, or in part, of wood. At first it proceeded with despatch, but more slowly and more difficultly as it approached the walls, from which the besieged annoyed the workmen with missiles, and, at the same time, constantly harassed them from the sea. To protect themselves from these attacks the Macedonians built on the verge of the mole two high towers, armed with engines, and covered with raw hides as defence against darts armed with fire. These the Tyrians destroyed by a peculiarly constructed fire-ship. Having filled a large transport with dry twigs and combustible matter, they fixed two masts in the prow, heaped faggots high around them, and added pitch, sulphur, and every thing that was proper to feed the flames. To each mast they fastened two yard-arms, from the ends of which two cauldrons were suspended, filled with combustibles. The ballast they moved entirely to the stern, to raise her head as high out of the water as possible. Thus prepared, they took advantage of a favourable wind to run her up on the mole, and set fire to her, the crew escaping by swimming; and both mole and towers were speedily involved in the conflagration. Meanwhile the Tyrians, from ships and boats, assisted in the ruin, destroyed the piles, and burnt those engines which would otherwise have escaped the flames. The work therefore had to be recommenced, and it was rebuilt on a larger scale*.

While this labour was proceeding, Alexander's fleet was reinforced in consequence of the submission of the Cypriots and Sidonians, to an extent which enabled him to command the sea, and compelled the Tyrians to block up the mouths of their harbours. Numerous mechanics were employed in constructing military engines; some of which were placed on board the

* Arrian, ii. 19.

largest ships of the fleet, and the rest were mounted on the mole. The Tyrians, still to have the advantage of height, built wooden towers upon their walls facing the mole. This would seem scarcely necessary if we credit Arrian's assertion, that the city wall in that part was 150 feet high*; but it gives us a scale for measuring the altitude of Alexander's towers, which we may assume, from this precaution, to have been as great or greater. On the side to the sea they cast fiery darts into the attacking ships, and showers of stones, which not only did much harm in their fall, but raised a bank which made it impossible to get close up to the walls. The Macedonians therefore were obliged to clear away these impediments; a work in itself of difficulty and labour, increased by the resolution of the Tyrians, who openly, by sending armed ships, and secretly, by means of divers, cut adrift from their moorings the vessels employed on this service. The Macedonians frustrated this method of defence by using chains instead of cables for mooring, and succeeded at last in clearing away the bank, and getting access to the wall. On the north side, and that next the mole, it resisted their efforts; but a breach was effected on the south side by battering from the ships, and an assault was made, but without success. On the third day afterwards,

* Mr. Rooke, the English translator of Arrian, observes, that "the number here must needs be erroneous, though all the copies which I have seen have it the same." The height certainly is startling, but it is hazardous to conclude that it must be wrong. Not to rely over-much on the walls of Babylon, which, according to the father of history, were about 350 feet high, the battering towers described by Vitruvius (see Pompeii as above), 185 feet in height, were evidently meant to cope with fortifications as gigantic in height as those here described. And after all, the city being built on an abrupt rock, which might perhaps be faced with masonry, if we suppose the whole height from the sea to the battlements to be meant, there is nothing improbable in the statement. The total height of the fortifications of Malta from the sea, we believe, is not much less.

the breach being enlarged, a second assault was made under Alexander in person, and the town was carried. Eight thousand Tyrians were slain, and thirty thousand persons, natives and strangers, are said to have been sold for slaves.

The most remarkable feature of this siege is the battering in breach from the shipping, which would seem a most unstable base for the cumbrous and weighty engines which must have been used. It may be wished that Arrian had been more explicit on this subject, but he has given no explanation of the means employed. Quintus Curtius relates far greater wonders, and in the same proportion is less worthy of belief than the plain and unassuming statement of Arrian, which we have followed.

The siege of Syracuse, undertaken by the Romans under command of Marcus Claudius Marcellus, B. C. 213, is rendered most remarkable by the interposition of the celebrated geometrician, Archimedes. Many extraordinary stories are told of the wonderful things done by him, which, if they rested only on the authority of Plutarch, and other compilers of stories, it would be the natural and simple course to reject; but some of the most singular are affirmed by Polybius, almost a contemporary, well skilled in war, and of undoubted credit for honesty and discernment; and one point, of which Polybius makes no mention, has been ascertained to be practicable by modern experiment. It is to be regretted that but a fragment of his account remains.

Syracuse was divided into five districts, the little island of Ortygia, Acradina, Tycha, Neapolis, and Epipolæ. Marcellus directed his attack against Acradina, which adjoined the sea, with fifty quinqueremes, or vessels with five banks of oars, well filled with soldiers armed with all kinds of missile weapons to clear the walls. He had also eight ships

fitted out in a peculiar way with machines called *sambucæ*, from some fancied resemblance to a harp. They were thus prepared : two ships were lashed together, the oars being taken from the two adjoining sides, so as to form, as it were, one large double-keeled vessel, affording a broad and stable base. A ladder was then made, four feet broad, of the necessary height, protected at the sides and above with gratings and hides, so as to form a sort of covered way to the very summit of the walls. It was then so placed, the foot at the stern, the head projecting beyond the prow, that it could be raised by ropes run through pulleys at the mast-heads. At the top was a platform large enough to contain four men, with high sides which turned on hinges, and which being let down served as bridges, to connect the ladder with the walls of the besieged town.

At the request of Hiero, king of Syracuse, Archimedes had in past years constructed a great number of machines for casting stones and darts; with which the walls were so well supplied, that the Romans were defeated in every attempt to approach : Marcellus ran his ships by night beneath the walls, hoping to be within the range of these destructive engines. Here, however, he was anticipated, for Archimedes had hollowed chambers in the walls themselves, with narrow openings, like the embrasures of a Gothic castle, from which archery, and the smaller sorts of missile engines, were directed against the Roman ships with destructive effect. Against the sambucæ he had contrived machines, from which long beams or yards projected, when in use, far beyond the walls. These were heavily weighted with stone or metal to the extent of not less than ten talents, or 1250 pounds. A rapid circular motion being then given to the beam by machinery within the walls, this weighted lever was dashed against the ladder with

such force as generally to break it, while the ship itself was exposed to considerable danger. This story not being good enough for Plutarch, he has told us, that when the sambuca was a good way off the walls, a stone ten talents weight was thrown into it, and then a second, and third, which destroyed the vessel; and in consequence considerable ridicule has been thrown on the tale. As told by Polybius it seems little open to objection. Weights, not of half a ton, but several tons, are constantly to be seen on our wharfs suspended on cranes, at a considerable distance from a centre of motion. Add to one of these the machinery requisite to give a rapid circular motion to the projecting arm thus laden, and we have the engine of Archimedes, as described by Polybius. The geometrician had also fitted out powerful cranes, with hooks and chains, by which he could lift a ship almost out of the water. When it was raised to the greatest practicable height, the chain was slipped, and the vessel usually was either upset by the fall, or plunged so deep as to fill with water. Marcellus is reported to have observed (it must have been a forced joke), that Archimedes used his ships for cups to draw water in. Finally he was obliged to abandon the attack by sea. Appius Claudius, who conducted the siege by land, fared no better; and it was resolved at last to give up all hopes of succeeding by force, and trust to the slow operation of blockade. "Thus," says Polybius, "one man, and one art rightly prepared *, is for some matters a mighty and a wonderful thing; for the Romans, having such power by land and sea, take away but one old man of Syracuse, might have expected immediately to capture the city; but while Archimedes was there, they dared not even to attack it in that manner, against which he was capable of defending it."

* δεόντως ἡρμοσμένη πρὸς ἔνια τῶν πραγμάτων μέγά τι χρῆμα φαίνεται καὶ θαυμάσιον.

It is also said that Archimedes set the Roman ships on fire by means of burning mirrors, composed of a combination of plane mirrors, adjusted so as to reflect all the incident rays of light to the same point. The possibility of this has several times been the subject of inquiry to modern philosophers. Kircher took so much interest in the subject, that he went to Syracuse expressly to inquire into the probable position of Marcellus's fleet, and he arrived at the conclusion, that it might have been within thirty yards of the walls. Buffon's experiments, made as well as those of Archimedes with a combination of plane mirrors, are conclusive as to the facility of setting tarred fir plank on fire at a distance of one hundred and fifty feet, and the possibility of doing it at considerably greater distances.[t] Similar planks, and even more combustible materials, were precisely what Archimedes had to deal with. He is said to have operated in this way at the distance of a bow-shot, in which there may very probably be exaggeration.

The sequel of the siege contains no matter of interest. Syracuse was taken by surprise through the negligence of the guard, and Archimedes is said to have been slain by a soldier, as he was deeply intent on the solution of a problem.

Lines of circumvallation continued long to be the principal means employed by the Romans in the reduction of strong places. Even the inventive genius of Cæsar does not appear to have devised the means of dispensing with this tedious and most laborious process. In his Gallic wars he had frequent recourse to it, though the Gallic fortifications, it might be thought, could not be of the most formidable description; and the siege of Alesia furnishes one of the most remarkable instances of it on record. The town stood on an eminence, surrounded on three sides by hills of equal height, at a moderate distance: in front extended a plain, three miles in length.

Round the foot of this eminence he dug a trench, twenty feet in width; and again, at an interval of 400 feet, two more, of which the inner one was filled with water: behind them he built a rampart twelve feet high, crowned with battlements, and strengthened with towers at intervals of eighty feet; and, more effectually to confine the besieged, and enable a smaller force to guard the works, the space between them and the inner ditch was filled with three distinct rows of obstacles. The first consisted of a sort of abattis, made with large branches of trees, with the ends squared and sharpened, set firmly in the earth (*cippi*). The next were called lilies (*lilia*), from their resemblance to the calix of that flower, with its upright pistil: these were circular cup-shaped cavities, three feet deep, with a sharpened stake in the centre, projecting about four inches above ground, and covered over with brush-wood to deceive assailants. Still nearer to the town iron hooks (*stimuli*, like the Scottish *calthrop*, often used with effect against the English cavalry) were scattered, to lacerate the feet of the advancing enemy. The whole circuit of these works was fourteen miles, and a similar series protected the troops from attack from without *.

To come down to a period more interesting to modern readers, we find, in the middle ages, the same principles of operation followed, but in a ruder way, since neither men, nor money, nor science were so abundant among the nations who established kingdoms on the ruins of the western empire, as among the Romans; and, moreover, the turbulent independence of a feudal army, whose term of service was usually limited to a certain time, was unfitted for the severe labour, or the patient and continued watching, which the Roman legionaries cheerfully underwent. Still such skill as our ancestors of the

* Bell. Gall. vii. 72.

middle ages had was borrowed from the Romans; they employed the same species of machines, towers, rams, and moveable galleries called cats, and the same or similar projectile engines, mentioned under the same names of catapultæ, onagri, scorpiones, &c. in the Latin authors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and mangonels, trebuchets, war-wolfs, &c. in the vernacular tongue. The first defence of a castle or city was usually a strong wooden palisade, called the barriers; and at these many of the most obstinate contests and remarkable feats of arms recorded by Froissart and other chroniclers of the times took place. These being carried, the next step was to level the ground, drain or fill up the ditch, and prepare for bringing up the battering-rams or towers, or scaling-ladders, if it were thought fit to attempt an escalade. In the first crusade the headlong valour of the Christian knights endeavoured in vain to overleap the walls or force the gates of Jerusalem: time was required to construct two moving towers, and on the difficulty of procuring wood the fiction of the enchanted forest of Armida, in Tasso's poem, is founded. The leader of the Genoese, one of the great maritime states of Italy, was the architect.

This man begunne with wondrous art to make
Not rammes, not mighty brakes, not slings alone,
Wherwith the firm and solid walls to shake,
To cast a dart, or throw a shaft or stone;
But, framed of pines and firres, did undertake
To build a forteresse huge, to which was none
Yet ever like, whereof he clothed the sides
Against the balles of fire with raw bulls' hides.

In mortisses and sockets framed just
The beames, the studdes, and punchions joyned he fast:
To beat the cities wall, beneath forth burst
A ram with horned front; about her wast

A bridge the engine from her side out thrust,
Which on the wall, when need required, she cast,
And on her top a turret small up stood,
Strong surely armed, and builded of like wood.

Set on a hundred wheels, the rolling masse
On the smooth lands went nimbly up and downe,
Though full of armes, and armed men it was,
Yet with small pain it ran as it had flowne,
Wonderèd the champions queint to see it passe,
They praised the workmen and their skill unknowne,
And on that day two towres they builded more,
Like that which sweet Erminia burnt before*

The archers shotte their arrowes sharpe and keene,
Dipt in the bitter juice of poyson strong,
The shady face of heaven was scantly seen,
Hid with the cloud of shaft and quarries long
Yet weapons heap with greater fury beene
Cast from the towres the Pagan troop among,
For thence flew stones and clift of marble rocks,
Trees shod with iron, timber, logs, and blocks

A thunderbolt seeme every stroke it strake
His limmes and armour so on whom it light,
That life and soule it hid not only late,
But all his face and shape it foyled quight.
The lances stud not in the wounds they make,
But through the gored body tore their flight
From side to side, through flesh, through skin and rinde
They flew, and flying left sadde death behinde

But yet not all this force and fury drove
The Pagan people to forsake the walle,
But to revenge these deadly blowes they strove
With darts that flie, with stones and trees that fall,

* Fairfax's Tasso, xviii 43.

For need so cowards oft courageous prove,
For liberty they fight, for life, for all,
And oft with arrows, shafts, and stones that flie,
Give bitter answer to a sharp replie.

This while the fierce assailants never cease,
But sternly still maintaine a threefold charge,
And 'gainst the cloud of shafts draw nigh at ease,
Under a pentise made of many a targe;
The armed towres close to the bulwarks preast,
And strive to grapple with the battled marge,
And launch their bridges out; mean while below
With iron fronts, the rammes the walls down throwe.
(68—71.)

Rinaldo, according to the romancer, raises a ladder, and scales the walls single-handed; but Godfrey of Bouillon, who is present in one of the towers, finds greater obstacles:—

For there not man with man, nor knight with knight
Contend, but engines there with engines fight.

For in that place the Paynims reared a post
Which late had served some gallant ship for mast,
And over it another beam they crost,
Pointed with iron sharpe, to it made fast
With ropes, which as men would the dormant tost
Now in, now out, now backe, now forward cast;
In his swift pullies oft the men withdrew
The tree, and oft the riding balke forth threw.

The mighty beame redoubled oft his blowes,
And with such force the engine smote and hit,
That her broad side the towre wide open throwes,
Her joynts were broke, her rafters cleft and split;
But yet, 'gainst every hap whence mischief grows
Prepared, the piece ('gainst such extremes made fit),
Lanched forth two sithes, sharpe, cutting, long, and broade,
And cut the ropes, whereon the engine reade.

As an old rocke, which age, or stormy winde
Teares from some craggy hill, or mountaine steepe,
Doth breake, doth bruise, and into dust doth grinde
Woods, houses, hamlets, herds, and folds of sheep;
So fell the beame, and down with it all kinde
Of arms, of weapons, and of men did sweep,
Wherewith the towers once or twice did shake,
Trembled the walls, the hills and mountains quake.
(80, 81, 82)

The Turks attempt to burn the tower with wild-fire, but are prevented by a providential tempest, and it approaches so close that the besiegers throw their drawbridge on the walls. The courage of Godfrey was animated by a divine vision of all those princes who had been slain in the sacred war, bearing arms in behalf of the crusaders.

And on the bridge he stept, but there was staid
By Soliman, who entrance all denied;
That narrow tree to virtue great was made
The field, as in few blowes right soon was tried.
Here will I give my life for Sion's aid,
Here will I end my days, the Soldan cried;
Behind me cut, or breake this bridge, that I
May kill a thousand Christians first, then die.

But thither fierce Rinaldo threatening went,
And at his sight fled all the Soldan's traine;
What shall I do? if here my life be spent,
I spend and spill (quoth he) my blood in vaine;
With that his steps from Godfrey back he bent,
And to him let the passage free remaine,
Who threatening followed as the Soldan fled,
And on the walls the purple crown displed:

About his head he tost, he turned, he cast
That glorious ensign with a thousand twines;
Thereon the wind breathes with his sweetest blast—
Thereon with golden rays glad Phebus shines:

Earth laughs for joy, the streames forbeare their hast,
Flouds clap their hands, on mountains dance the pines;
And Sion's towres and sacred temples smile
For their deliv'rance from that bondage vile.
(xviii. 98—100.)

We originally meant only to introduce Tasso's description of the towers, and have been led on to protract the quotation to far greater length, from finding not only so lively, but there is all reason to believe, so accurate a description, making allowance for a little poetical exaggeration of the mode of combat then in use. The poet has at least the merit of being true to the facts related by the historians. Two towers were constructed, one of which, intrusted to the charge of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, was burnt by the besieged; the other, directed by Godfrey in person, was brought safely up to the walls. Large beams were applied to prevent its close approach, as described by the poet, and these being cut away, were taken possession of, and proved very serviceable to the crusaders. The walls were cleared, not only by archery, but by a much less warlike and romantic device. The wind blowing into the town, the assailants set on fire a mattress stuffed with silk (*culcitram bombyce plenam*), and bags of straw, so that "they who were appointed to defend the wall, unable to open eyes or mouth, besotted and bewildered with the eddies of the smoky darkness, deserted their post. Which being known, the general with all haste commanded the beams which they had captured from the enemy to be brought up, and one end resting on the machine, the other on the wall, he ordered the moveable side of the tower to be let down; which being supported on them, served in the place of a bridge of suitable strength*." This, it must be confessed, is a less romantic way of gaining entrance

* William of Tyre.

than fighting hand to hand with Solyman: but it is true, for the valour and personal prowess of Godfrey of Bouillon were unsurpassed, and there is no reason to suspect that flattering historians have perverted the fact, that Godfrey, noblest of the crossed chiefs in character as in station, was the third man to enter that holy city, for the delivery of which he longed so ardently, and had sacrificed so much. Two brothers, named Letold and Engelbert, otherwise unknown to fame, were the first who won their way to these contested walls.

For reasons above given the strong fortresses of feudal pride were more frequently carried by a sudden and vigorous attack, than by the tedious and expensive process of regular siege. Of such attacks some remarkable instances occur in the wars between England and Scotland, which at some future period we may perhaps notice; at present it is more to our purpose to quote from the graphic pages of Froissart this short passage, which is so completely ancient in character that change the names and it might pass for the act of a Roman army:—

"The Englysshemen, that had lyen long before the Ryoll* more than nyne weekes, had made in the mean space two belfroys of grete tymbre, with four stages, every belfroy upon foure grete whelys, and the sydes toward the towne were covered with cure boly†, to defend them fro fyre and fro shotte; and into every stage there were poynted a C archers: by strength of men these two belfroys were brought to the walles of the towne, for they had so filled the dykes, that they might well be brought just to the walles; the archers in these stages shotte so holly togyder, that none durst apere at their defence, without they were well pavysshed‡, and between these two

* La Réole, a town in Gascony. † Boiled leather, "cuir boulu."
‡ Pavisses were large shields or defences made of plank, &c.,

belfroys there were a CC men with pic-axes to mine the walles, and so they brake through the walles. * * * When Sir Agous de Ban, who was captain within, knewe that the people of the towne wolde yelde up, he went into the castell with his companye of soudyers, and whyle they of the towne were entretyng he conveyed out of the towne gret quantyte of wyne and other provisyon, and then closed the castell gates, and sayd how he wolde not yeld up so sone. Then the erle (of Derby) entred into the towne and layde siege round about the castell as nere as he mighte, and rered up all his engynes, the which caste nyght and day agaynst the walles, but they dyd lytell hurt, the walles were so strong of harde stone; it was sayd that of olde tyme it had been wrought by the handes of the Sarasyns, who made their warkes so strongly that ther is none such now a dayes. When the erle sawe that he colde do no good with his engynes, he caused them to cease; then he called to hym his myners, to thyntent that they shuld make a myne under alle the walles, the whiche was nat sone made*."

In the time of Froissart the invention of gunpowder had already begun to work a change in the art of war: still, then and for some time afterwards, the imperfection of the artillery in use rendered them of little real service†. Usually of immense and unwieldy size and weight, the difficulty of transporting them from place to place was extreme, and they could not be fired more than three or four times in the

which archers and others bore before them, or fixed in the earth, that they might shoot, mine, &c. in partial cover from the shot of the garrison.

* Lord Berners' Froissart, vol. i. cap. 109.

† One of these old guns, of remarkable size, made of bars of hammered iron hooped together, is to be seen in Edinburgh castle, and is called Mons Meg.

day, at great expense and with uncertain execution. Even so late as the siege of Magdeburg, in 1631, it is said that 1550 cannon shots were fired against one wall with but little effect. But as the art of gunnery advanced, the battering train was found to be an overmatch for the strongest fortresses that had yet been constructed, and a new system of fortification came gradually into use. Low bastions and curtains took place of the lofty towers and walls of former castles; and still the advantage is so entirely transferred from the besieged to the besiegers, that the termination of a siege pursued according to the rules of art is reduced almost to certainty as to the time and method of its issue. This has diminished the interest of modern sieges, by making ultimate capture almost a certainty, and rendering it the interest of the garrison rather to make terms while they have something to give up, than to hold out to those extremes of difficulty and distress, of which ancient history abounds in striking examples. It has also rendered both the attack and defence matters more of combination and science, and less of individual gallantry. There is, however, one war in the transition stage, as it were from ancient to modern tactics, distinguished especially by the number and length of its sieges, and by the constancy and desperate valour shown by the beleaguered party in every instance. Even were we indifferent to the parties, the narrations would in themselves be deeply interesting, but the nobleness of their cause renders the sufferings of the brave defenders doubly affecting—their triumphs doubly glorious. The reader will readily conclude that we refer to the desperate struggle of the Netherlands for civil and religious liberty against the mighty despotism of Spain. Three sieges which occurred in this war are especially worthy of the rea-

der's attention, those of Leyden, Haarlem, and Ostend. That of Leyden has been already noticed in the first volume; and after some hesitation we have selected the siege of Ostend for relation here, as being more full of incident, not of interest, than that of Haarlem. We give it from the contemporary historian, Bentivoglio:—

"We will now come to the siege of Ostend, which, being one of the most memorable of this our age, doth certainly challenge, that, as much brevity and diligence as may be being joyned together, it be duly considered and represented with all clearness. It was above three years before it was brought to an end; and it was almost as uncertain at the last day as at the first to which side the victory did incline. The besieged never wanted fresh succours by sea, nor did the besiegers at any time cease advancing by land. Infinite were the batteries, the assaults infinite; so many were the mines, and so obstinate the countermines, as it may be almost affirmed as much work was done under ground as above ground. New names were to be found for new engines. There was a perpetual dispute between the sea and land: the works on the latter could not operate so much as the mines made by the former did destroy. Great store of blood ran every where, and men were readier to lose it than to preserve it, till such time as the besieged wanting ground, and rather what to defend than defence, they were at last forced to forego that little spot of ground which was left them, and to yield.

"Ostend stands upon the sea-shore, and in the midst of a marish ground, and of divers channels which come from the continent; but it is chiefly environed almost on all sides by two of the greatest of them *,

* See the medal at the head of this chapter.

by which the sea enters into the land, and grows so high when it is full sea, as you would rather think the town were buried than situated in the sea. In former times it was an open place, and served rather for a habitation for shepheards than for soldiers. But the importancy of the seat being afterwards considered, the houses were inclosed with a platform instead of a wall, and from time to time the line was so flank round about it, as it proved to be one of the strongest towns of all the province of Flanders. It is divided into two parts, which are called the old town and the new. The former, which is the lesser, stands towards the sea; the latter and greater lies towards the land. The old town is fenced from the fury of the sea by great piles of wood driven into the ground, and joined together for the defence of that part, and there the waves sufficiently supply the part of a ditch. The channels may be said to do the like on the sides; and, especially at full sea, of channels they become havens, being then capable of any kind of vessels, and by them at all times the middle size of barks enter into the ditches, and from the ditches in diverse parts into the town itself; to boot, with the chief well-flanked line on the outside of the ditch, towards the land side is a strada coperta raised, which is so well furnished with new flanks, and with a new ditch, as this outward fortification doth hardly give way to any of the inward ones. The town is but of a small compass, and is ennobled rather by its situation and fortifications than by any splendour either of inhabitants or houses. The united Provinces caused it to be very carefully kept at this time, wherefore it was largely provided of men, artillery, ammunition, and of whatsoever else was necessary for the defence thereof. In this condition was the town when the Archduke resolved to sit down before it."

On the east of the town there was a detached fort called St. Alberto, on the west another called Bredene, both which had been abandoned by the garrison. These were occupied by the besieging army, which proceeded to surround Ostend on the landward with a chain of works, not without sharp fighting, for the governor, Sir Francis Vere, had raised redoubts in front of his fortifications, and hotly contested every inch of ground. It seemed also necessary to cut off the communication with the sea, and with this view a bank was run out on the eastern side from St. Alberto to prevent barks from entering by the channel on that quarter. But it was also expedient to block up the channel on the side of Bredene, and in doing this greater difficulties were to be overcome.

The siege began in the summer of 1601, and the autumn had been consumed in these works, when, towards the end of December, a terrible storm at sea so shattered the town, that the inhabitants, despairing to resist an assault, began to parley; but their spirits were recruited, and the negotiations broken off by a seasonable reinforcement both of men and all manner of provisions. The Archduke, being thus deluded of his hopes, gave order that a battery should be raised on the side of St. Alberto, which played so furiously upon the sea bulwark, that a practicable breach was soon made, and an assault ordered. To divert the enemy, directions were given that Count Bucquoy, who commanded at Bredene, should pass the channel there, and fall with his men on the wall where it was beaten down, and that upon the land side there should be alarms given every where. "When they came to the assault the assailants behaved themselves gallantly, and used all means to get upon the wall; and though many of them fell down dead and wounded, and that the

horror of night, which already came on, made their dangers the more terrible, yet did it serve rather to set the Catholics on fire, than to make them cool in their fight. But there appeared no less resoluteness of resistance in those within: for opposing themselves valiantly on all sides, and being very well able to do it, as having so many men, and such store of all other provisions, they stoutly did defend themselves on all sides. Upon the coming on of night they had set up many lights in divers parts of the town, whereby they the better maintained the places assigned to them, did with more security hit those that assailed them, and came the better to where their help was required. They also soon discerned that they were all false alarms that were given without, and that the true assault was made only in one place. To this was added, that Count Bucquoy, not finding the water of the aforesaid channel so low as he believed, he could by no means pass over them. Yet the Catholics did for a long time continue their assault, but the defendants' advantages still increasing, the assailants were at last forced to give over with great loss; for there were above six hundred slain and wounded. Nor did those within let slip the occasion of prejudicing yet more the Catholics as they retreated: for plucking up some of their sluces, by which they both received the sea-water into their ditches and let it out again, they turned the water with such violence into the channel, which the Catholics had passed over before they came to the assault, and which they were to pass over again in their retreat, as many of them were unfortunately drowned."

The year 1602 set in with such severe cold that the Archduke was advised to abandon the siege. But he would not be persuaded thereto, thinking the King's honour and his own engaged in its success.

He ordered therefore a great platform to be raised in the quarter of St. Alberto, which might command the town as much as possible, and gave new orders that Bucquoy should advance, with all possible speed, the great bank which was designed to obstruct the channel of Bredene. Having given these orders he retired to Ghent, and left the camp-master, John di Rivas, in command of the siege, who employed himself diligently in forwarding these important works. "To the first and largest foundation, which was well incorporated with wet sand and other condense matter, others of the like sort were added, till the dyke was grown to the height it ought to be; and the breadth thereof was very extraordinary great. To boot with the ordinary plain thereof, upon which two great cannons might stand a-breast, there was a great parapet raised in it against the town to shelter the soldier; and which, being in divers places furnished with artillery, did greatly endamage the enemy likewise on that side. This work was made in a sandy and low situation, and whither the sea at full tide came; so as it cannot be said with how much expense, labour, and loss of blood, this work was advanced." Still the town continued to receive succours as plentifully as ever, and the works proceeded so slowly from without, that the hopes of bringing the siege to a happy end did daily rather decrease than increase. Yet Rivas was very diligent in discharging his duty; the platform was completed and mounted with cannon, and the besieged were driven from some of their outer works; these were then furnished with artillery which he turned against the fortifications which sheltered the town on that side.

"Some progress was likewise daily made on Bredene's side in the advancing the great dyke. Bucquoy had the chief charge thereof, and it was called by his name. And he used all possible dili-

gence to infest the town and the entrance of the channel on that side. But there appeared no less vigilancy in the besieged; their courage abounded, according as the town did abound with all sorts of provisions. There was hardly any one day in which they did not sally out; nor did the besiegers do any thing which cost not much labour and blood. The platform was made chiefly of bavins and other wood, and the great dyke was composed of the like materials. Two furious batteries were therefore levelled from the town, with artificial fire-balls against these two works, to set them on fire, and indamage them by that means. Nor did they fail in their design: for by long battery they at last took fire, and were thereby so torn and spoiled, as it cost much time and the death of many men to repair them. Nor was the enemies' loss less either in number or quality.

"Pompeio Torgone, a famous engineer, was at this time come from Italy to Flanders, drawn thither by the fame of this siege. He had a very ready wit, which made him apt for inventions in his calling; but having never till then passed from the theory to the practical part in military affairs, it was soon seen that many of his imaginations did not, upon trial, prove such as in appearance they promised to be. He began to build a castle of wood upon boats fastened together. The castle was round, high, and large proportionably. On the top thereof it was capable of six great pieces of artillery on one side, and on the other side there was place enough for those soldiers who were to attend them. Torgone intended to bring this machine into the mouth of the channel, and to firm it there, where succour was brought into Ostend, hoping hereby to keep the town from relief. But this could not so soon be done, but that it was preceded by the other work of

drawing the great dyke to the same channel, whereupon to raise afterwards a fort, by which that passage might be so much the more impeded. To accelerate *this work likewise, Torgone* bethought himself *of other engines, by which that so great quantity of materials, whereof the dyke was made, might the* more easily be brought to employment. The said materials being put together in manner as they ought to be, he put a certain number of little barrels under the hollow of the middle thereof, and on the sides, by which at full sea the engines floated, and were afterwards brought by cranes to joyn with the dyke in that part where the work was continued on. These engines were called flotes. But such was the tempest of the enemies cannon-shot, which incessantly fell upon them, when they rested upon the sand; and then again they were so prejudiced by the sea storms, as oft times the work of many days was destroyed in a few hours. And really it was a pitiful case to see how much blood was there shed, and how little the meaner sort of people who were employed therein did out of a desire of gain value it."

This was the condition of Ostend when the Archduke bethought himself to give the care of the siege to the Marquis Spinola. Great certainly was the honour of such an employment, yet there seemed so little prospect of success that Spinola hesitated for some time; but, finally, being persuaded there was more of hope than fear in the offer that was made him, he resolved cheerfully to accept it.

"The first thing the Marquis did was to make great store of provision of all such materials as were necessary, as well for the work of the great dyke on Bredene's side, as for the other works which were to be made on the side of St. Alberto, on which side the town was chiefly intended to be straitened

and forced; the ground over against it was all sandy, and full of several channels and little rivulets, besides those two greater channels which fell into the sea, as you have often heard. The same sea likewise, at the flood, did so whirl about every place thereabouts, as ground was not any where to be found to make trenches, which were therefore to be supplied with the above said materials. These were chiefly brought by the flotes invented by Torgone; and though the great dyke did daily advance, yet it was known that such a work would prove too long and too uncertain. The hope of keeping out succour growing there every day less and less, Spinola bent all his endeavours to take the town by force. We told you before that all vessels were hindered from coming into the lesser channel, on St. Alberto's side, which falls there into the sea by a fort. Yet the channel itself was of great advantage to the enemy on that side, for it served for a great ditch to their counterscarp, which was strong of itself, and yet made stronger by many flanks by which it was defended. Before the Catholics could come to assault the counterscarp, they must first pass over the channel, which was so hard to do with safety or shelter in any place thereof, as it was evidently seen that many of them must perish, being exposed to be injured by the enemy. The oppugnation was led on, on four sides, from St. Alberto's quarter. The Germans wrought nearer the sea; then followed the Spaniards; after them the Italians; and on the outmost side, more towards land, the Walloons and Burgonians. Great was the fervency of all these nations; and such a contention there was among them in striving which of them should most advance the works, as the soldiers' emulation seemed rather a contest between enemies than between rivals. The channel was narrower and more shallow where the Burgo-

nians and Walloons wrought. They were therefore the first that passed over it, and afterwards the other nations did the like. To pass over it, a great quantity of the aforesaid materials were thrown into every part thereof, where the aforesaid nations wrought. Those materials were reduced to dykes or banks, upon which the soldiers advanced towards the town. But very many of them were slain and wounded. For the defendants, with their hail of musquet-shot and tempest of greater artillery, charged with little bullets and murdering shot in great quantity, and oft time with artificial fire, made the Catholics' work on all sides very bloody. The soldiers, that they might go the best sheltered that they could, invented many fences: some consisted of gabions filled with earth, well joined and fastened together; others of long bavins, which stood upright, and stood so thick as they were musket proof; and others, of several forms, made of the aforesaid materials. Torgone invented likewise a great cart, from which a bridge made of cloth and cords might unexpectedly be thrown over the channel, and so the enemies' defences might the easier be assaulted. The cart stood upon four very high wheels; and upon the fore-part thereof rose up, as it were, the mast of a ship, which served chiefly to let down and to take up the bridge. But the whole bulk proved to be of so cumbersome a greatness, and so hard to be managed, that, before it was undertaken, it was known it could work no effect. The aforesaid fences were wrought where the artillery of the town could not reach; and, at the flowing of the sea, they were brought upon the floats, to the places where they were made use of. Great was the mortality likewise of those that wrought here; the enemy making usually such havock of them with their muskets, artillery, and sallies, as oft times hardly one of them

could be saved. But money still got new men, and oft times the soldiers themselves wrought. Nor was Spinola wanting in being in all places at all times, and in exposing himself as well as any of the rest to all labour and danger; encouraging some, rewarding others, and behaving himself so, as his imitating, without any manner of respect unto himself, the most hazardous works of others, made the rest the more ready to imitate his.

" When each nation had passed the channel, each of them began with like emulation to force the ravelins and half-moons which sheltered the counterscarp. And the Walloons and Burgonians, by reason of their quarter, were the first that did it, but with much effusion of blood, even of the noblest amongst them; for amongst the rest, Catris, a Walloon campmaster, was lost; a valiant and greatly experienced soldier, and whom Spinola highly esteemed, both for his deeds and counsel. With the like progress, and no less loss of blood, did the other nations advance. So as the enemies at last lost all the fortifications which they had without their principal line; about which a great ditch ran, but not so hard to pass as was the channel which fenced the counterscarp. The easier doing of it made the Catholics hope better in the effecting thereof; wherefore, full of fresh courage, they prepared to continue their labours more heartily than ever, that they might the sooner end the siege; but the winter being already come on did much hinder their works, and the sea did then more destroy them by her tempests. The enemy did likewise make very fierce opposition; they set up batteries within against the batteries without; mines opposed countermines; they repaired themselves on all sides, and as fast as one rampire was lost they set up another. So as the Catholics were to advance by inchmeal; and yet they

did so advance, as by the spring they were got well forward into the ditch.

"These already progressions of Marquess Spinola, together with his still daily proceedings, made the United Provinces shrewdly afraid that they should at last lose Ostend. It was therefore consulted amongst their chief commanders how the town might be best preserved: which might be done by two ways; either by some important diversion, or by raising the siege by main force. The second affair brought with it such difficulties, as the first was embraced. Wherefore they resolved to besiege Sluce; a town which likewise stood upon the sea, and of so great consequence, as did rather exceed than come short of those of Ostend."

Sluys was accordingly besieged and taken, to the great satisfaction of the Flemish, that, in three months' time and with the loss of so little blood, they had made a greater acquisition than that of Ostend, which would cost above three years' expense of time, and an infinity of Spanish gold and blood if it could hold out no longer. But though Spinola made an unsuccessful attempt to relieve Sluys, he could not be prevailed on to break up the siege of Ostend, and his troops were inflamed the more by a desire of counterbalancing that loss. So that at last, after much slaughter, they won the ditch and the first line of fortifications; but meanwhile a new one had been raised by those within.

"Sluce was just then lost: and it was feared that Count Maurice would come to the relief of Ostend. The Catholics being therefore so much the more moved, and Spinola being again returned, it is not to be expressed with what fervour they fell to their works on all sides. The greatest progress was made towards the old town of Ostend; and because when

they should have won that, they might easily hinder the entrance into the channel, by the mouth whereof succour was brought from the sea; and for that the new town was much commanded by the old, therefore Spinola did the more reinforce his batteries, assaults, mines, and all his other most efficacious works on that side than on any other; nor was it long ere the Catholics had almost wholly taken it.

"They likewise advanced after the same manner against the new fortifications, so as now the besieged had no where whither to retreat; wherefore, wanting ground to defend, when they most abounded in all things for defence, they were at last forced to surrender the town; which was done about the midst of September, upon all the most honourable conditions that they could desire. Count Maurice was often minded to attempt the succour by main force; but considering that he was to enter into an enemy's country, amongst strong and well-guarded towns, and that he should meet with men that were very ready to fight, he thought it not fit, after his prosperous success at Sluce, to hazard falling into some misfortune, as upon such an occasion he might peradventure do, and therefore he forebore to do it. It was a remarkable thing to see so many soldiers march out of a town; for there were above four thousand of them, all strong and healthful, they having enjoyed great plenty of all things in Ostend, by reason of their continual succours. So as besides great store of artillery, there was found in the town such abundance of victuals, ammunition, and of whatsoever else may be imagined for the defence of a royal town, as the like was never known to be in any other place.

"Thus ended the siege of Ostend; very memorable, doubtless, in itself, but much more in consideration of the so great expense of monies and time which the winning and losing of it cost. The

siege continued above three years; in which time the constant opinion was, that there died, what by the sword, what by sickness, above a hundred thousand men between the one and the other side; whereby it may be conceived what proportionable monies and other things were therein spent. The town being yielded up, the Archduke and Infanta had the curiosity to go see it, and went from Gaunt thither, where they found nothing but a mishapen chaos of earth, which hardly retained any show of the first Ostend. Ditches filled up; curtains beaten down; bulwarks torn in pieces; half-moons, flanks, and redoubts so confused one with another, as one could not be distinguished from another; nor could it be known on which side the oppugnation, or on which side the defence was; yet they would know all, and receive the whole relation from Spinola's own mouth. He represented at full the last posture of the siege: he showed the Spaniards quarters, and that of the Italians, as also those of each other nation. He related how stoutly they contended who should outvie one another in painstaking; on which part the greatest resistance was made within; where the dispute was most difficult without; where they wanted ground to retreat unto; where the enemy used their utmost power; and where at last the town was surrendered. The Archduke saw the great platform, the great dyke, and whatsoever else of curious might be suggested by the unusual face of that siege; but not without the Infanta's great compassion, and even almost tears, by looking upon the horror of those parts where the sword, fire, sea, and earth may be said to have conspired together in making so long and so miserable a destruction of Christians. They both of them did very much commend Spinola, and did also thank the rest of the commanders who had deserved well in that enterprise. Nor did they less

gratulate the inferior officers and soldiers, who had exposed themselves most to those dangers*."

Remarkable in modern history is the siege and storm of Magdeburg in the thirty years' war by the Imperial troops, commanded by Tilly, when that general blighted the laurels acquired in thirty-six successful battles, and fixed an indelible stain upon his reputation. Even poetical justice might be satisfied by the events of his after-life, which, from a series of victories became one of reverses, produced in part, at least, by his own act, if it be true that the excesses perpetrated on this occasion produced a lasting bad effect on the discipline of his army. But, on the plains of Leipzic, in the person of Gustavus Adolphus, he met at length with his superior in the art of war.

"I must now arm my breast with sternness, my heart with impenetrability, while I relate the events which broke in foaming billows over this wretched city,—events, for their magnitude, extraordinary; for their mournfulness, but too calamitous; for their importance, rarely known in former ages; and for their rarity, easily unheard of. So may this mind be able to recite the reverses, the tragic incidents which in this our age, by inevitable destiny, have oppressed Magdeburg, a city of the empire, powerful and strong as ancient,—this pen endure through the description of such horrid destruction. But whence to commence the tempests of so pitiable an event? whence seek those dreadful varieties of punishment, for the relation of which all Germany is scarce sufficient? I am far from thinking that with this pen I can do justice to so mournful, so extraordinary a calamity. For he who would worthily express a catastrophe, which will amaze furthest posterity, must needs be

* Bentivoglio, Hist. of Wars in Flanders, translated by Henry, Earl of Monmouth, 1698.

qualified by an iron memory, a strong and unconquered style, since it is his duty to find words answerable to actions*."

The modest doubts expressed in the above rather pompous passage have not restrained the historian, from whom we quote, from proving, in a long and tedious narrative, that he justly estimated the relative extent of his subject and his powers. We purpose to take warning by his example, and act upon the diffidence which he expresses. The reader is as capable of imagining, as the author, unless an eye-witness, of describing, the behaviour of soldiers flushed with rage and blood let loose upon an unarmed population: and either is likely to produce but a confused picture, made up chiefly by ringing the changes upon what the author of 'Old Mortality' calls "the four pleas of the crown" Instead, therefore, of multiplying anecdotes of brutality and suffering, we shall only give the narratives of two eye-witnesses, the simplicity of which is a guarantee for their truth. The first is written by the minister of a church in Magdeburg. It is necessary to premise that the assault was made at daybreak, as the hour when the garrison were most likely to be off their guard, and at a time when a general belief was entertained that Tilly was about to break up the siege. It was therefore entirely unexpected.

"Going out of church immediately after sermon, some people of St. James's parish passed by, and told me the enemy had entered the town. With difficulty could I persuade myself that this was any thing more than a false alarm; but the news unfortunately proved too true. I then lost my presence of mind, and as my wife and maid-servant were with me, we ran directly to my colleague, M. Malsio's

* Lotichius, Rerum Germanicarum, lib. xxxvii. p. 1.

house, and left our own house open. At M. Malsio's we found many people, who had fled to him in great perplexity. We comforted and exhorted each other, as far as the terror of our minds would give us leave. I was summoned thence to discharge the last duties to a colonel, who lay dangerously wounded. I resolved to go, and sent my maid to fetch my gown: but before my departure from my wife and neighbours, I told them that the affair appeared to me to be concluded, and that we should meet no more in this world. My wife reproached me in a flood of tears, crying, 'Can you prevail on yourself to leave me to perish all alone? You must answer for it before God!' I represented to her the obligations of my function, and the importance of the moments I was called upon to give my assistance in.'

"As I crossed the great street a multitude of matrons and young women flocked about me, and besought me, in all the agonies of distress, to advise them what to do. I told them, my best advice was to recommend themselves to God's protecting grace, and prepare for death. At length I entered the colonel's lodging, and found him stretched on the floor, and very weak. I gave him such consolation as the disorder of my mind would permit me: he heard me with great attention, and ordered a small present of gold to be given me, which I left on the table. In this interval, the enemy poured in by crowds at the Hamburg gate, and fired on the multitude as upon beasts of prey. Suddenly my wife and maid-servant entered the room, and persuaded me to remove immediately, alleging we should meet with no quarter, if the enemy found us in an apartment filled with arms. We ran down into the court-yard of the house, and placed ourselves in the gateway. Our enemies soon burst the gate open, with an eagerness that cannot be described. The first address they made to me was,

'Priest, deliver thy money.' I gave them about four and twenty shillings in a little box, which they accepted with good will: but when they opened the box, and found only silver, they raised their tone, and demanded gold. I represented to them that I was at some distance from my house, and could not at present possibly give them more. They were reasonable enough to be contented with my answer, and left us, after having plundered the house, without offering us any insult. There was a well-looking youth among the crowd, to whom my wife addressed herself, and besought him in God's name to protect us: 'My dear child,' said he, 'it is a thing impossible; we must pursue our enemies;' and so they retired.

"In that moment another party of soldiers rushed in, who demanded also our money. We contented them with seven shillings and a couple of silver spoons, which the maid fortunately had concealed in her pocket. They were scarce gone before a soldier entered alone with the most furious countenance I ever saw; each cheek was puffed out with a musket-ball, and he carried two muskets on his shoulder. The moment he perceived me, he cried with a voice of thunder, 'Priest, give me thy money, or thou art dead.' As I had nothing to give him, I made my apology in the most affecting manner: he levelled a piece to shoot me, but my wife luckily turned it with her hand, and the ball passed over my head. At length, finding we had no money, he asked for plate: my wife gave him some silver trinkets and he went his way.

"A little after came four or five soldiers, who only said, 'Wicked priest, what doest thou here?' Having said thus much, they departed.

"We were now inclined to shelter ourselves in the uppermost lodgings of the house, hoping there to be less exposed and better concealed. We entered a

chamber that had several beds in it, and passed some time there in the most insupportable agonies. Nothing was heard in the streets but the cries of the expiring people; nor were the houses much more quiet; every thing was burst open or cut to pieces. We were soon discovered in our retirement: a number of soldiers poured in, and one who carried a hatchet made an attempt to cleave my skull, but a companion hindered him and said, 'Comrade, what are you doing? Don't you perceive that he is a clergyman?'

"When these were gone a single soldier came in, to whom my wife gave a crape handkerchief off her neck; upon which he retired without offering us any injury. His successor was not so reasonable: for entering the chamber with his sword drawn, he immediately discharged a blow upon my head, saying, 'Priest, give me thy money.' The stroke stunned me; the blood gushed out in abundance, and frightened my wife and servant to that degree that they both continued motionless. The barbarian turned round to my wife, aimed a blow at her, but it glanced fortunately on her gown, which happened to be lined with furs, and wounded her not. Amazed to see us so submissive and patient, he looked at us fixedly for some moments. I laid hold of this interval to represent to him that I was not in my own house, being come to the place where I was to discharge my duty to a dying person, but if he would grant us quarter, and protect us to our home, I would then bestow upon him all I had. 'Agreed, priest,' said he, 'give me thy wealth, and I will give thee the watch-word: it is Jesu Maria; pronounce that and no one will hurt thee.' We went down stairs directly, highly contented to have found such a protector. The street was covered with the dead and dying; their cries were enough to have pierced the

hearts of the greatest barbarians. We walked over the bodies, and when we arrived at the church of St. Catherine, met an officer of distinction on horseback. This generous person soon discovered us, and seeing me covered with blood, said to the person who conducted us, 'Fellow-soldier, fellow-soldier, take care what you do to these persons.' At the same time he said to my wife, 'Madam, is yonder house yours?' My wife having answered that it was, 'Well,' added he, 'take hold of my stirrup, conduct me thither, and you shall have quarter.' Then turning to me, and making a sign to the soldiers with his hand, he said to me, 'Gentlemen of Magdeburg, you yourselves are the occasion of this destruction: you might have acted otherwise.' The soldier who had used me ill, took this opportunity to steal away. Upon entering my house, we found it filled with a multitude of plunderers, whom the officer, who was a colonel, ordered away. He then said he would take up his lodging with us, and having posted two soldiers for a guard to us, left us with a promise to return forthwith. We gave, with great cheerfulness, a good breakfast to our sentinels, who complimented us on the lucky fortune of falling into their colonel's hands; at the same time representing to us that their fellow-soldiers made a considerable booty while they continued inactive merely as a safe-guard to us, and therefore beseeching us to render them an equivalent to a certain degree. Upon this I gave them four rose nobles, with which they were well contented, and showed so much humanity as to make us an offer to go and search for any acquaintance whom we desired to place in safety with us. I told them I had one particular friend who had escaped to the cathedral, as I conjectured, and promised them a good gratuity on his part if they saved his life. One of them accom-

panied by my maid-servant went to the church, and called my friend often by name; but it was all in vain, no one answered, and we never heard mention of him from that period.

"Some moments after our colonel returned, and asked if any person had offered us the least incivility. After we had disculpated the soldiers in this respect, he hastened abroad to see if there was any possibility to extinguish the fire, which had already seized great part of the city: he had hardly got into the street, when he returned, with uncommon hastiness, and said, 'Show me the way out of the town, for I see plainly we shall perish in the flames if we stay here a few minutes longer.' Upon this we threw the best of our goods and moveables into a vaulted cellar, covered the trap-door with earth, and made our escape. My wife took nothing with her but my robe; my maid seized a neighbour's infant child by the hand, whom we found crying at his father's door, and led him away. We found it impossible to pass through the gates of the town, which were all in a flame, and the streets burnt with great fury on either side: in a word, the heat was so intense that it was with difficulty we were able to breathe. Having made several unsuccessful attempts, we determined at last to make our escape on the side of the town next the Elbe. The streets were clogged with dead bodies, and the groans of the dying were insupportable. The Walloons and Croatians attacked us every moment, but our generous colonel protected us from their fury. When we gained the bastion, which stands on the bank of the Elbe, we descended it by the scaling-ladders which the Imperialists had made use of in the assault, and arrived at length in the enemy's camp near Rottensee, thoroughly fatigued and extremely alarmed.

"The colonel made us enter his tent, and pre-

sented us some refreshments. That ceremony being over, 'Well,' said he, 'having saved your lives, what return do you make me?' We told him that for the present we had nothing to bestow, but that we would transfer to him all the money and plate that we had buried in the cellar, which was the whole of our worldly possessions. At this instant many Imperial officers came in, and one chanced to say to me, 'Ego tibi condoleo, ego sum addictus Fidei Augustanæ.' The distressed state I found myself in, made me unable to give a proper reply to the condolences of a man who carried arms against those whose religion he professed, and whose hard fortune he pretended to deplore.

"Next day the colonel sent one of his domestics with my maid-servant to search for the treasure we had buried in the cellar, but they returned without success, because as the fire still continued they could not approach the trap-door. In the mean while the colonel made us his guests at his own table, and during our whole stay treated us not as prisoners, but as intimate friends.

"One day at dinner an officer of the company happened to say, that our sins were the cause of all the evil we suffered, and that God had made use of the Catholic army to chastise us; to whom my wife replied, that the observation perhaps was but too true; however, take care, continued she, lest God in the end should throw that very scourge into the flames. This sort of prophecy was fulfilled soon afterwards on the self-same Imperial army, which was almost totally destroyed at the battle of Leipzic.

"At length I ventured one day to ask our colonel to give us leave to depart: he complied immediately, on condition that we paid our ransom. Next morning I sent my maid into the town to try if there was any possibility of penetrating into the cellar: she was

more fortunate that day, and returned with all our wealth. Having returned our thanks to our deliverer, he immediately ordered a passport to be prepared for us, with permission to retire to whatever place we should think proper, and made us a present of a crown to defray the expense of our journey. This brave Spaniard was colonel of the regiment of Savelli, and named Don Joseph de Ainsa *."

The sack of Magdeburg was an event of uncommon atrocity, and abhorred as such even in that age. But from the sort of clemency experienced by this clergyman, who was plundered of his goods after having nearly lost his life, and yet seems to feel much gratitude to his protector, we may imagine the treatment which the peasantry and citizens received from the rude soldiery of that time. These men, both officers and soldiers, were in a great degree mercenaries, who resorted to the wars expressly to mend their fortunes, and were not likely to exercise the presumed rights of the victor with much moderation. Few of their generals had much sympathy with the sufferings of non-combatants, of peaceable countrymen, and wealthy burghers; and those who might have been inclined to enforce discipline and soften the evils of war, were shackled by the deficiency of financial resources, and the consequent irregularity in issuing pay and other requisites to their armies. "There are things, my lord, in the service of that great prince (Gustavus Adolphus) that cannot but go against the stomach of any cavalier of honour. In especial, albeit the pay be none of the most superabundant, being only about sixty rix-dollars a month to a captain; yet the invincible Gustavus never paid above one-third of that sum, which was distributed monthly by way of loan, although when justly con-

* Harte's Life of Gustavus Adolphus.

sidered it was in fact a borrowing by that great monarch of the additional two-thirds, which were due to the soldier."

"But were not these arrears," said Lord Monteith, "paid to the soldiery at some stated period?" "My lord," said Dalgetty, "I take it upon my conscience that at no period, and by no possible process, could one creutzer of them ever be recovered. I myself never saw twenty dollars of my own all the time I served the invincible Gustavus, unless it was from the chance of a storm or victory, or the fetching in of some town or doorp, when a cavalier of fortune, who knows the usage of wars, seldom faileth to make some small profit."

"I begin rather to wonder, sir," said Lord Monteith, "that you should have continued so long in the Swedish service, than that you should have ultimately withdrawn from it."

"Neither should I," answered the captain, "but that great leader, captain and king, the Lion of the North, and bulwark of the Protestant faith, had a way of winning battles, taking towns, over-running countries, and levying contributions, whilk made his service irresistibly delectable to all true-bred cavaliers who follow the noble profession of arms. Simple as I ride here, my lord, I have myself commanded the whole stift of Dunklespiel on the Lower Rhine, occupying the Palsgrave's palace, consuming his choice wines with my comrades, calling in contributions, requisitions, and caduacs, and failing not to lick my fingers as became a good cook. But truly all this glory hastened to decay after our great master had been shot with three bullets, upon the field of Lutzen; wherefore, finding that fortune had changed sides, that the borrowings and lendings went on as before out of our pay, while the caduacs

and casualties were all cut off, I e'en gave up my commission, and took service with Wallenstein in Walter Butler's Irish regiment."

"And may I beg to know of you," said Lord Monteith, "how you liked this change of masters?"

"Indifferent well," said the captain, "very indifferent well. I cannot say that the Emperor paid much better than the great Gustavus. For hard knocks, we had plenty of them. * * * Howbeit, in despite of heavy blows and light pay, a cavalier of fortune may thrive indifferently well in the Imperial service, in respect his private casualties are nothing so closely looked to as by the Swede; and so that an officer did his duty on the field, neither Wallenstein nor Pappenheim, nor old Tilly before them, would likely listen to the objurgations of boors or burghers against any commander or soldado by whom they chanced to be somewhat closely shorn. So that an experienced cavalier, 'knowing how to lay,' as our Scottish phrase runs, 'the head of the sow to the tail of the grice,' might get out of the country the pay which he could not obtain from the Emperor."

"With a full hand, sir, doubtless, and with interest," said Lord Monteith.

"Indubitably, my lord," answered Dalgetty, composedly; "for it would be doubly disgraceful for any soldado of rank to have his name called in question for any petty delinquency*."

We do not quote the great romancer as historical authority; but there is no doubt but that Captain Dalgetty, though perhaps highly coloured, is no unfaithful likeness of those needy and profligate adventurers who bartered blood for gold, and formed a large portion of the armies of the age, indifferent on which side they fought, and constant only while

* Legend of Montrose, chap. ii.

pay, plunder, or promotion were at hand to reward their services.

The other narrative is that of a fisherman, a child at the time of this event, who is said to have survived it nearly ninety years.

"The 10th of May, early in the morning, at the time the master of our school was reading prayers, a report flew through the streets that the town was taken, which was confirmed by the ringing of the alarm bells. Our master dismissed us all in a moment, saying, 'My dear children, hasten to your homes, and recommend yourselves to the protection of God; for it is highly probable we shall meet no more except in heaven.' In an instant we all disappeared, some one way, and some another. For my own part, I took my course with speed along the high street; and found where the public steelyards are (and where the grand guard of the city was kept), a considerable body of troops with their swords drawn; and saw near them, and at a distance round them, a great number of soldiers stretched dead upon the pavement. Terrified with so melancholy a sight, I shaped my course down the street called Pelican, with a view to conceal myself in my father's house; but had hardly advanced a few steps, before I fell in with a band of soldiers who had that moment murdered a man whom I saw weltering in his blood. This sight shocked me to such a degree, that I had not power to move forwards; but sheltering myself in a house opposite to the Pelican inn, found a kind-speaking middle-aged man, who said to me, 'Child, why comest thou hither? save thyself before the soldiers seize thee.' I was strongly tempted to put his advice in practice; but in that moment a party of Croatians rushed in, and holding a sabre to his throat, demanded his wealth. The old man imme-

diately opened a coffer to them, full of gold and silver, and precious stones. They crammed their pockets with his riches; yet as the coffer was not emptied, they filled a small basket with the part that remained, and then shot the poor old man through the head. I stole away behind them, and found a place of safety among some empty casks, and there found a young lady, perfectly handsome, who conjured me to remove and make no mention of her. Anxiously reflecting where to dispose of myself, the same Croatians surprised me again, and one of them said, 'Bastardly dog, carry this basket for us.' I took it up immediately, and followed them wherever they went. They entered several cellars, and rifled women, maidens, and all persons that fell into their hands, without remorse. As we ascended from one of these cellars, we saw with astonishment, that the flames had seized upon the whole fore part of the house. We rushed through the fire, and saved ourselves. In all probability, every soul was destroyed that remained within doors. As for my father, mother, and relations, I never heard a syllable concerning them from that time to the present *."

This last sentence expresses briefly and emphatically the fate of the population. The whole town was burnt, except the cathedral, the convent of Nôtre Dame, with a few houses about it, and about a hundred and thirty fishermen's cottages on the banks of the Elbe. The number of the slain cannot be distinctly ascertained, for we have no certain knowledge of the population of the city; but the slaughter seems to have been almost universal. It is said, however, that according to the computation of those who were appointed to clear the streets, 6,440 bodies were thrown into the Elbe; and this does not include those, probably much the greater number, who were

* Harte's Life of Gustavus Adolphus.

massacred in their houses, and buried under the ruins, or consumed in the general conflagration. One author says that 30,000 persons perished; Harte, that of 40,000 inhabitants, scarce 800 it was thought escaped: but contemporary authors vary in their numbers, which indeed in these cases can hardly ever be ascertained with certainty. The only lives expressly said to have been preserved, are those of 400 persons who took refuge in the cathedral; and in the Florus Germanicus, published only ten years later, (a book written in the Imperial interest,) it is asserted that none other were spared, and these only from respect to the sanctity of the place. The author, however, reduces their number to a hundred. Others must have been saved, like those whose narratives are given above, by chance, or individual compassion; but it is plain that indiscriminate destruction was the order of the day. This massacre will be an everlasting blot upon Tilly's reputation. He remained without the town; and when solicited by those who had witnessed the horrors acted within, to stop the indiscriminate slaughter, he replied, "The town must bleed; it has not yet made sufficient expiation. Let the soldiers persist another hour, and then we will reconsider the matter." According to another story, he said that the soldiers must have some recompense for so much time and trouble. Yet, say the historians of his own party, when on the third day he rode over the crackling ashes, and through piles of corpses, he wept as he quoted some lines of Virgil, relative to the destruction of Troy*.

There was no want of prodigies to foretell the fate

* Venit summa dies, et inevitabile fatum,
——————— fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria *Parthenopes*.

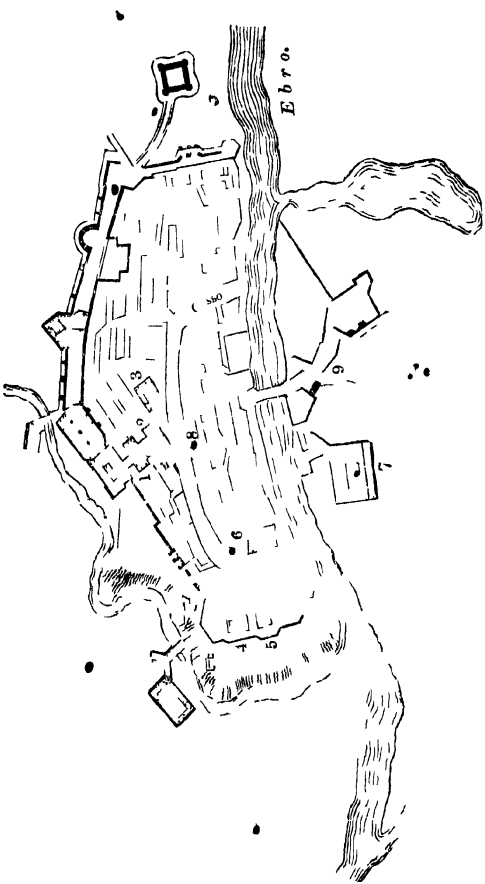
Parthenopes, substituted by the quoter for the original word Teucrorum, has the same meaning as Magdeburg, the maiden city.

of Magdeburg, by monstrous births, the fall of towers, and other circumstances of equal moment; several of which the curious reader will find mentioned by Harte, and many more minutely described by Lotichius, as above quoted. Such follies must have been deeply implanted in men's minds when a Christian writer, in the seventeenth century, has thought it worth while to corroborate one of these omens by quoting a similar one from Valerius Maximus.

The engineer's art has materially diminished the interest of modern sieges, by reducing them, independent of external relief, almost to certainty, and substituting the combinations of science for the personal exertions of the soldier. The warfare of trenches and batteries, by which outwork after outwork is rendered untenable, often without a bayonet being crossed in their defence, fails to rivet the attention, and indeed is scarce intelligible without some share of professional knowledge. It is not until the cannon have done their work, and opened a way to individual strength and courage, not until the assaulting columns are ready to ascend the breach, that the deep interest is roused which even against our better judgment attends on military daring. Still after giving so many various specimens of this branch of warfare, it may naturally be supposed that we shall not pass in silence over all the brilliant actions of our own time: and the attention is at once directed to the Peninsular war, not only as the field in which the military energy of our empire was most successfully developed, but because it produced a great number of sieges of remarkable interest; while not one such occurs in the campaigns which Napoleon conducted in person. A volume of sieges might be compiled from this war, illustrative both of military resolution and of popular energy and desperation: no wonder then if we have hesitated between the contending claims of Zaragoza

and Gerona. The latter city is the favourite of Colonel Napier, who cites its resistance to prove how far the regulated warfare of a disciplined force is superior to the enthusiasm of a population untrained to arms. The grounds of his preference are briefly these. Zaragoza was manned by above 30,000 soldiers and 25,000 armed citizens and peasants; but she wanted heavy artillery, regular fortifications, and a controlling spirit: for both the reputation and authority of Palafox appear to have been nominal, and it is to the influence of plebeian leaders that the ferocious energy of the defence is to be ascribed. Gerona contained about 3,000 regular troops, and less than 6,000 armed citizens; but she was well fortified, and commanded by an experienced and resolute officer. With this inferior force she held out twice as long as Zaragoza against a superior attacking army, conducted the defence in regular military order, and kept the enemy without her defences, instead of admitting him to wage a desperate struggle on her hearthstones and in her churches. On these grounds the defenders of Gerona may merit the preference assigned to them by Colonel Napier, for having displayed equal bravery and devotion, with better fortune or greater skill. Still the irregular and desperate struggle in the streets of Zaragoza, where every house was a fortress, the end of every street a battery, where miner counterplotted miner, and every foot of ground was purchased by blood and ruin, will win the attention of more readers than would the systematic warfare carried on under the walls of Gerona.

Zaragoza is situated on the right bank of the Ebro. Before its first siege, in 1808, it contained 50,000 inhabitants. It possessed no regular defences, and few guns fit for service, but was surrounded by a low brick wall. These deficiencies were in some degree remedied by the nature of its buildings, which



St. Engraving 2 Middle 3 Convent of St Francisca 4 St Vonca 5 St. Augustin. 6 University
7 Convent of Jesus, 8 Mines 9 St Lazar
The dotted lines show how much of the city was garrisoned by the French during the second siege.

were well calculated for the internal warfare subsequently carried on, the houses being mostly built of brick and stone, and vaulted, so as to be almost incombustible. The city was also full of churches and convents, strongly built, and surrounded by high thick walls. A broad street called the Cosso, bent almost into a semicircle, concentric with the wall, and terminated at each end by the Ebro, divided the city into an outer and an inner part. It occupied the ground on which the Moorish walls had formerly stood, before the city attained its present size. This street was the scene of that heroic resistance in 1808, which kept the French at bay after the walls and one-half of the place had fallen into their hands. On the 3d of August, rather more than a month after the commencement of the siege, the convent of St. Engracia, which formed part of the wall, was breached; and on the 4th it was stormed, and the victorious troops carried all before them as far as the Cosso, and before night were in possession of one-half of the city. The French general now considered the city as his own, and summoned it to surrender in a note containing only these words, "Head-quarters, St. Engracia, Capitulation." The emphatic reply is well known, and will become proverbial: "Head-quarters, Zaragoza, War to the knife."

"The contest which was now carried on is unexampled in history. One side of the Cosso, a street about as wide as Pall-Mall, was possessed by the French, and in the centre of it their general, Verdier, gave his orders from the Franciscan convent. The opposite side was maintained by the Arragonese, who threw up batteries at the openings of the cross streets, within a few paces of those which the French erected against them. The intervening space was presently heaped with dead, either slain upon the spot, or thrown out from the windows. Next day, the ammu-

nition of the citizens began to fail: the French were expected every moment to renew their efforts for completing the conquest, and even this circumstance occasioned no dismay, nor did any one think of capitulation. One cry was heard from the people, whenever Palafox rode amongst them, that if powder failed, they were ready to attack the enemy with their knives—formidable weapons in the hands of desperate men. Just before the day closed, Don Francisco Palafox, the general's brother, entered the city with a convoy of arms and ammunition, and a reinforcement of 3,000 men, composed of Spanish guards, Swiss, and volunteers of Arragon: a succour as little expected by the Zaragozans, as it had been provided against by the enemy.

"The war was now continued from street to street, from house to house, and from room to room; pride and indignation having wrought up the French to a pitch of obstinate fury, little inferior to the devoted courage of the patriots. During the whole siege, no man distinguished himself more remarkably than the curate of one of the parishes within the walls, by name P. Santiago Sass. He was always to be seen in the streets, sometimes fighting with the most determined bravery, at other times administering the sacrament to the dying, and confirming with the authority of faith that hope, which gives to death, under such circumstances, the joy, the exaltation, the triumph, and the spirit of martyrdom. Palafox reposed the utmost confidence in the brave priest, and selected him when any thing peculiarly difficult or hazardous was to be done. At the head of forty chosen men, he succeeded in introducing into the town a supply of powder, so essentially necessary for its defence.

"This most obstinate and murderous conflict was continued for eleven successive days and nights, more indeed by night than by day; for it was almost certain

death to appear by day-light within reach of those houses which were occupied by the other party. But under cover of the darkness, the combatants frequently dashed across the street to attack each other's batteries; and the battles which began there were often carried on into the houses beyond, where they fought from room to room, and from floor to floor. The hostile batteries were so near each other, that a Spaniard in one place made way under cover of the dead bodies which completely filled the space between them, and fastened a rope to one of the French cannons; in the struggle which ensued the rope broke, and the Zaragozans lost their prize at the very moment when they thought themselves sure of it.

"A new horror was added to the dreadful circumstances of war in this ever memorable siege. In general engagements the dead are left upon the field of battle, and the survivors removed to clear ground and an untainted atmosphere: but here, in Spain, and in the month of August, there where the dead lay the struggle was still carried on, and pestilence was dreaded from the enormous accumulation of putrifying bodies. Nothing in the whole course of the siege so much embarrassed Palafox as this evil. The only remedy was to tie ropes to the French prisoners, and push them forward amid the dead and dying, to remove the bodies and bring them away for interment. Even for this necessary office there was no truce, and it would have been certain death to the Arragonese, who should have attempted to perform it: but the prisoners were in general secured by the pity of their own soldiers, and in this manner the evil was in some degree diminished.

"A council of war was held by the Spaniards on the 8th, not for the purpose which is too usual in such councils, but that their heroic resolution might be communicated to the people. It was, that in those quarters of the city, where the Arragonese still main-

tained their ground, they should continue to defend themselves with the same firmness: should the enemy at last prevail, they were then to retire over the Ebro into the suburbs, break down the bridge, and defend the suburbs till they perished. When this resolution was made public, it was received with the loudest acclamations. But in every conflict the citizens now gained ground upon the soldiers, winning it inch by inch, till the space occupied by the enemy, which on the day of their entrance was nearly half the city, was reduced gradually to about an eighth part. Meantime intelligence of the events in other parts of Spain was received by the French, all tending to dishearten them. During the night of the 13th, their fire was particularly fierce and destructive; in the morning, the French columns, to the great surprise of the Spaniards, were seen at a distance, retreating over the plain, on the road to Pampeluna*."

Zaragoza, however, was a place of too much importance, long to enjoy in quiet her hard-earned laurels. In the course of the autumn, the French recovered their superiority in Arragon, and had no sooner done so, than they bent their strength to repair the disgrace which their arms had sustained, and overthrow the firmest bulwark of independence in the western provinces of Spain. The inhabitants, aware that their heroic resistance had purchased only a temporary deliverance, employed the intervening time in repairing and improving their external defences, and still more so in preparing to renew to greater advantage that internal conflict, in which experience had shown their real strength to exist.

"It has already been observed, that the houses of Zaragoza were fire-proof, and generally of only two stories, and that in all the quarters of the city the numerous and massive convents and churches rose like

* Southey, Hist. Peninsular War, chap. ix.

castles above the low buildings, and that the greater streets running into the broadway, called the Cosso, divided the town into a variety of districts, unequal in size, but each containing one or more large structures. Now the citizens, sacrificing all personal convenience, and resigning all idea of private property, gave up their goods, their bodies, and their houses to the war; and being promiscuously mingled with the peasantry and the regular soldiers, the whole formed one mighty garrison, well suited to the vast fortress into which Zaragoza was transformed: for the doors and windows of the houses were built up, and their fronts loop-holed; internal communications were broken through the party-walls, and the streets were trenched and crossed by earthen ramparts mounted with cannon, and every strong building was turned into a separate fortification. There was no weak point, because there could be none in a town which was all fortress, and where the space covered by the city was the measurement for the thickness of the ramparts; nor in this emergency were the leaders unmindful of moral force.

"The people were cheered by a constant reference to their former successful resistance; their confidence was raised by the contemplation of the vast works that had been executed; and it was recalled to their recollection that the wet, usual at that season of the year, would spread disease among the enemy's ranks, and impair, if not entirely frustrate, his efforts. Neither was the aid of superstition neglected: processions imposed upon the sight, false miracles bewildered the imagination, and terrible denunciations of divine wrath shook the minds of men whose former habits and present situation rendered them peculiarly susceptible of such impressions. Finally the leaders were themselves so prompt and terrible in their punishments, that the greatest cowards were likely

to show the boldest bearing, in their wish to escape suspicion.

"To avoid the danger of any great explosion, the powder was made as occasion required; and this was the more easily effected, because Zaragoza contained a royal depôt and refinery for saltpetre, and there were powder-mills in the neighbourhood, which furnished workmen familiar with the process of manufacturing that article. The houses and trees beyond the walls were all demolished and cut down, and the materials carried into the town. The public magazines contained six months' provisions; the convents were well stocked: and the inhabitants had likewise laid up their own stores for several months. General Doyle had also sent a convoy into the town from the side of Catalonia, and there was abundance of money, because, in addition to the resources of the town, the military chest of Castanos's army, which had been supplied only the night before the battle of Tudela, had been in the flight carried into the town.

"Companies of women, enrolled to attend the hospitals, and to carry provisions and ammunition to the combatants, were commanded by the Countess Burita, a lady of an heroic disposition, who is said to have displayed the greatest intelligence and the noblest character during both sieges. There were thirteen engineer officers, and 800 sappers and miners, composed of excavators, formerly employed on the canal, and there were from 1,500 to 2,000 cannoneers.

"The regular troops that fled from Tudela being joined by two small divisions which retreated at the same time from Sanguessa and Caparosa, formed a garrison of 30,000 men, and together with the inhabitants and peasantry presented a mass of 50,000 combatants, who with passions excited almost to frenzy awaited an assault amidst those mighty en-

trenchments, where each man's home was a fortress and his family a garrison. To besiege with only 35,000 men a city so prepared was truly a gigantic undertaking*."

It was on December 20, 1808, that Marshals Moncey and Mortier appeared in front of the town. We pass over the early part of the siege, which contains nothing to distinguish it from a multitude of others. The French, supported by a powerful battering and mortar train, advanced their trenches slowly towards the town until January 22, when Marshal Lasnes arrived to assume the command. On the 29th four breaches were declared practicable. That night four columns rushed to the assault; one was repulsed, the other three established themselves, and the ramparts of the city became the front line of the French trenches.

"The walls of Zaragoza thus went to the ground, but Zaragoza herself remained erect; and as the broken girdle fell from the heroic city, the besiegers started at the view of her naked strength. The regular defences had indeed crumbled before the skill of the assailants, but the popular resistance was immediately called with its terrors into action. * * * The war being now carried into the streets of Zaragoza, the sound of the alarm-bell was heard over all the quarters of the city, and the people assembling in crowds, filled the houses nearest to the lodgments made by the French. Additional traverses and barricadoes were constructed across the principal streets; mines were prepared in the more open spaces; and the communications from house to house were multiplied, until they formed a vast labyrinth of which the intricate windings were only to be traced by the weapons and the dead bodies of the defenders. The members of the junta, become more powerful

* Napier's History of the Peninsular War, book v. chap. 2.

from the cessation of regular warfare, with redoubled activity and energy urged the defence, but increased the horrors of the siege by a ferocity pushed to the very verge of frenzy. Every person, without regard to rank or age, who excited the suspicion of these furious men, or those immediately about them, was instantly put to death; and amid the noble bulwarks of war a horrid array of gibbets was to be seen, on which crowds of wretches were suspended each night, because their courage had sunk beneath the accumulating dangers of their situation, or because some doubtful expression or gesture of distress had been misconstrued by their barbarous chiefs.

"From the heights of the walls which he had conquered, Marshal Lasnes contemplated this terrific scene; and judging that men so passionate and so prepared could not be prudently encountered in open battle, he resolved to proceed by the slow but certain progress of the mattock and the mine; and this was also in unison with the Emperor's instructions. Hence from the 29th of January to the 2d February, the efforts of the French were directed to the enlargement of their lodgment on the walls; and they succeeded after much severe fighting and several explosions in working forward through the nearest houses, but at the same time they had to sustain many counter-assaults from the Spaniards.

"It has been already observed that the crossing of the large streets divided the town into certain small districts or islands of houses. To gain possession of these, it was necessary not only to mine but to fight for each house. To cross the large intersecting streets it was indispensable to construct traverses above or to work by underground galleries, because a battery raked each street, and each house was defended by a garrison that, generally speaking, had only the option of repelling the enemy in front,

or dying on the gibbet erected behind. But as long as the convents and churches remained in possession of the Spaniards, the progress of the French among the islands of small houses was of little advantage to them, because the large garrisons in the greater buildings enabled the defenders not only to make continual and successful sallies, but also to countermine their enemies, whose superior skill in that kind of warfare was often frustrated by the numbers and persevering energy of the besieged. * * * *

"The experience of these attacks* induced a change in the mode of fighting on both sides. Hitherto the play of the French mines had reduced the houses to ruins, and thus the soldiers were exposed completely to the fire from the next Spanish posts. The engineers therefore diminished the quantity of powder, that the interior only might fall, and the outward walls stand, and this method was found successful. Hereupon the Spaniards, with ready ingenuity, saturated the timbers and planks of the houses with rosin and pitch, and setting fire to those which could no longer be maintained, interposed a burning barrier which often delayed the assailants for two days, and always prevented them from pushing their successes during the confusion that necessarily followed the bursting of the mines. The fighting was however incessant, a constant bombardment, the explosion of mines, the crash of falling buildings, clamorous shouts, and the continued echo of musketry deafened the ear, while volumes of smoke and dust clouded the atmosphere, and lowered continually over the heads of the combatants, as hour by hour the French with a terrible perseverance pushed forwards their approaches to the heart of the miserable but glorious city.

"Their efforts were chiefly directed against two

* Attempts made by the French to force their way into the centre of the city from January 29th to February 2d.

points, namely, that of San Engracia, which may be denominated the left attack, and that of St. Augustin and St. Monica, which constituted the right attack. At San Engracia they laboured on a line perpendicular to the Cosso, from which they were separated only by the large convent of the daughters of Jerusalem, and by the hospital for madmen, which was entrenched, although in ruins since the first siege. The line of this attack was protected on the left by the convent of the Capuchins, which General Lacoste had fortified to repel the counter assaults of the Spaniards. The right attack was more diffused, because the localities presented less prominent features to determine the direction of the approaches; and the French, having mounted a number of light six-inch mortars on peculiar carriages, drew them from street to street, and from house to house, as occasion offered. On the other hand, the Spaniards continually plied their enemies with hand-grenades, which seem to have produced a surprising effect, and in this manner the never-ceasing combat was prolonged until the 7th of February, when the besiegers, by dint of alternate mines and assaults, had worked their perilous way at either attack to the Cosso, but not without several changes of fortune and considerable loss. They were, however, unable to obtain a footing on that public walk, for the Spaniards still disputed every house with undiminished resolution. * * *

"The 8th, 9th, and 10th were wasted by the besiegers in vain attempts to pass the Cosso; they then extended their flanks. * * * The 11th and 12th, mines were worked under the University, a large building on the Spanish side of the Cosso, in the line of the right attack; but their play was insufficient to open the walls, and the storming party was beaten with the loss of fifty men. Nevertheless, the besiegers continuing their labours during the 13th,

14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th, passed the Cosso by means of traverses, and prepared fresh mines under the University, but deferred their explosion until a simultaneous effort could be combined on the side of the suburb.

"At the left attack also a number of houses bordering on the Cosso being gained, a battery was established that raked that great thoroughfare above ground; while under it, six galleries were carried, and six mines loaded to explode at the same moment: but the spirit of the French army was now exhausted; they had laboured and fought without intermission for fifty days; they had crumbled the walls with their bullets, burst the convents with their mines, and carried the walls with their bayonets. Fighting above and beneath the surface of the earth, they had spared neither fire nor the sword; their bravest men were falling in the obscurity of a subterranean warfare; famine pinched them, and Zaragoza was still unconquered!

"'Before this siege,' they exclaimed, 'was it ever heard that 20,000 men should besiege 50,000?' Scarcely a fourth of the town was won, and they themselves were already exhausted. 'We must wait,' they said, 'for reinforcements, or we shall all perish among these cursed ruins, which will become our own tombs before we can force the last of these fanatics from the last of their dens.'

"Marshal Lasnes, unshaken by these murmurs and obstinate to conquer, endeavoured to raise the soldiers' hopes. He pointed out to them that the losses of the besieged so far exceeded their own, that the Spaniards' strength must soon be wasted, and their courage must sink, and that the fierceness of their defence was already abated; but if, contrary to expectation, they should renew the example of Numantia,

their utter destruction must quickly ensue from the combined effects of battle, misery, and pestilence.

"These exhortations succeeded, and on the 18th, all the combinations being complete, a general assault took place. The French at the right attack having opened a party wall by the explosion of a petard, made a sudden rush through some burning ruins, and carried without a check the island of houses leading down to the quay, with the exception of two buildings. The Spaniards were thus forced to abandon all the external fortifications between St. Augustin and the Ebro, which they had preserved until that day. And while this assault was in progress, the mines under the university, containing 3000 pounds of powder, were sprung; and the walls tumbling with a terrific crash, a column of the besiegers entered the place, and after one repulse secured a lodgment. During this time fifty pieces of artillery thundered upon the suburb, and ploughed up the bridge over the Ebro, and by mid-day opened a practicable breach in the great convent of St. Lazar, which was the principal defence on that side. Lasnes, observing that the Spaniards seemed to be shaken by this overwhelming fire, immediately ordered an assault, and St. Lazar being carried forthwith, all retreat to the bridge was thus intercepted, and the besieged falling into confusion, and their commander, Baron Versage, being killed, were all destroyed or taken, with the exception of two or three hundred men, who, braving the terrible fire to which they were exposed, got back into the town. General Gazan immediately occupied the abandoned works, and having thus cut off above 2000 men that were stationed on the Ebro, above the suburb, forced them also to surrender.

"This important success being followed on the 19th by another fortunate attack on the right bank of

the Ebro, and by the devastating explosion of 1600 pounds of powder, the constancy of the besieged was at last shaken. An aid-de-camp of Palafox came forth to demand certain terms, before offered by the Marshal, adding thereto that the garrison should be allowed to join the Spanish armies, and that a certain number of covered carriages should follow them. Lasnes rejected these proposals, and the fire continued, but the hour of surrender was come. Fifty pieces of artillery, on the left bank of the Ebro, laid the houses on the quay in ruins. The church of Our Lady of the Pillar, under whose especial protection the city was supposed to exist, was nearly effaced by the bombardment; and the six mines under the Cosso, loaded with many thousand pounds of powder, were ready for a simultaneous explosion, which would have laid a quarter of the remaining houses in the dust. In fine, war had done its work, and the misery of Zaragoza could no longer be endured.

"The bombardment, which had never ceased from the 10th of January, had forced the women and children to take refuge in the vaults, with which the city abounded. There the constant combustion of oil, the closeness of the atmosphere, unusual diet, and fear and restlessness of mind, had combined to produce a pestilence, which soon spread to the garrison. The strong and weak, the daring soldier and the timid child, fell before it alike; and such was the state of the atmosphere, and the disposition to disease, that the slightest wound gangrened and became incurable. In the beginning of February the deaths were from four to five hundred daily; the living were unable to bury the dead, and thousands of carcasses scattered about the streets and court-yards, or piled in heaps at the doors of the churches, were left to dissolve in their own corruption, or to be licked up

by the flames of the burning houses as the defence became contracted.

"The suburb, the greatest part of the walls, and one-fourth of the houses were in the hands of the French; 16,000 shells thrown during the bombardment, and the explosion of 45,000 pounds of powder in the mines, had shaken the city to its foundations, and the bones of more than 40,000 persons of every age and sex bore dreadful testimony to the constancy of the besieged.

"Palafox was sick; and of the plebeian chiefs, the most distinguished having been slain in battle, or swept away by the pestilence, the obdurate violence of the remaining leaders was so abated that a fresh junta was formed; and after a stormy consultation, the majority being for a surrender, a deputation waited on Marshal Lasnes on the 20th of February to negotiate a capitulation*."

Some doubt exists as to the terms obtained: the French writers assert that the place surrendered at discretion; the Spaniards say the following conditions were obtained: that the garrison should march out with the honours of war, to be constituted prisoners and marched to France; the peasants to be sent home, and property and religion to be guaranteed. On the 21st, from 12 to 15,000 sickly men laid down the arms which they could scarcely support, and this memorable siege was terminated.

* Napier, Hist. of Peninsular War, book v. chap. 3.

Chapter IV.

Corcyrean sedition—Civil wars of Rome—Jacquerie—Factions of the Circus at Constantinople—Massacre of Sept. 2, 1792.

The year which witnessed the unhappy fate of the brave Platæans, was made remarkable by the Corcyrean sedition also; on which, as on the plague of Athens, the pen of Thucydides has conferred a lasting celebrity.

Corcyra, an island situated on the western coast of Greece, by sedulous attention to commerce, had risen, a little before the Peloponnesian war, to the possession of a navy capable of rivalling in strength that of any Grecian state, except Athens. It was a colony of Corinth; but in consequence of some disputes which arose out of the affairs of Epidamnus, a Corcyrean colony, war broke out between Corcyra and the mother country, the Corcyreans concluded a defensive alliance with the Athenians, and the democratical interest was of course established in power. A naval battle ensued, in which the Corinthians had the advantage, and took upwards of a thousand prisoners. It rarely happened in any of the smaller Grecian states, that either the democratic or the oligarchichal party obtained an uncontested and permanent ascendancy; and the Corinthians were not inclined to resign without a struggle that respect and influence which the manners and religion of Greece taught to be due from the colony to the mother country. Of the prisoners above mentioned, eight hundred, who were slaves, were sold by the victors; the rest, to the

number of two hundred and fifty, were citizens, most of them men of consequence in Corcyra, who probably looked with no friendly eye on the Athenian alliance, and at all events were ready to break it off, and revert to the connection of Corinth, as the price of their liberty. They were accordingly suffered to return home. The tumults to which their subsequent attempts to restore the oligarchy gave rise are celebrated in history under the name of the Corcyrean sedition. A more heinous scene of treachery and murder has seldom been exhibited even in civil warfare; or a more deplorable state of morals described than that which is said by Thucydides in the following passage to have prevailed, not only in Corcyra, but throughout Greece.

"The sedition in Corcyra began upon the coming home of those captives which were taken in the battles by sea at Epidamnus, and released afterwards by the Corinthians at the ransom, as was voiced, of eight hundred talents, for which they had given security to their hosts *, but in fact, because they had persuaded the Corinthians that they would put Corcyra into their

* Προξένοι. The want of public houses of entertainment for travellers was necessarily supplied by private hospitality. He whose fortune it was to entertain to-day, of course expected to be entertained in return when he visited the country of his guest; and thus were formed hereditary connections of hospitality, held no less sacred than the ties of blood. By a natural extension of the practice, cities formed similar connections with foreign citizens, who received their ambassadors, and advocated as far as in them lay both the public interests of the community, and the private interests of those of its citizens who required such help. These men were named Proxeni; the bond of mutual obligation was publicly recorded, and entitled them to receive as guests the same hospitality and protection which they afforded as hosts. Ethelo-proxeni, below translated voluntary hosts, assumed the same duties, but voluntarily; without the connection being publicly acknowledged, and consequently without being entitled to that public return which the Proxenus claimed as his right.

power. These persons going round from man to man, solicited the city to revolt from the Athenians; and two galleys being now come in, one of Athens, another of Corinth, with ambassadors from both those states, the Corcyreans, upon audience of them both, decreed to hold the Athenians for their confederates, on articles agreed on: but withal to remain friends to the Peloponnesians, as they had formerly been. There was one Pithias, voluntary host of the Athenians, and that had been principal magistrate of the people. Him these men called into judgment, and laid to his charge a practice to bring the city into the servitude of the Athenians. He again, being acquit, called in question five of the wealthiest of the same men, saying they had cut certain stakes* in the ground belonging to the temples both of Jupiter and of Alcinous, upon

* "Probably vine sticks, round which the vines were trained. To understand the account given in the text, we must suppose that the individuals whom Pithias prosecuted were the tenants of the sacred ground from which the sticks were cut, and possibly had inherited the possession of it from their ancestors, so that they regarded it from long use as their own property: just as the Roman aristocracy thought themselves aggrieved when an Agrarian law called on them to resign the possession of the national lands which they had for so many generations appropriated to themselves without any lawful title. As hereditary tenants of the sacred ground, the Corcyrean nobles had probably been always in the habit of treating it as their own: so that when suddenly charged with sacrilege, in abusing their legal rights as tenants, by cutting down the trees, which belonged not to them, but to the god, the owner of the land, they, like the Roman nobility, had no legal defence to make, and could only maintain their encroachments by violence." This is Dr. Arnold's explanation. The Roman aristocracy, however, had a lawful title to the possession, though not to the full property, of the lands in question. See Penny Cyclopedia, art. Agrarian Law. A lease of certain public lands in Attica is preserved in the British Museum (Elgin Marbles, No. 261), in which the devastation of wood is especially forbidden. See Boeckh, Public Economy of Athens, English translation, vol. ii. p. 15. The prosecution and amount of fine were, however, evidently dictated by party spirit and revenge.

every one of which there lay a penalty of a stater*. And being sentenced to pay the fine, they took sanctuary in the temples, to the end, the sum being great, they might pay it by portions, as they should be taxed. But Pithias (for he was also of the senate) obtained that the law should proceed. These five being by the law shut out of hope, and understanding that Pithias, as long as he was a senator, would cause the people to hold for friends and foes the same that were so to the Athenians, conspired with the rest, and armed with daggers, suddenly brake into the senate house, and slew both Pithias and others, as well private men as senators, to the number of about sixty persons; only a few of those of Pithias his faction escaped into the Athenian galley that lay yet in the harbour.

"When they had done this, and called the Corcyreans to an assembly, they told them, that what they had done was for the best, and that they should not be now in bondage to the Athenians. And for the future they advised them to be in quiet, and to receive neither party with more than one galley at once; and to take them for enemies if they were more: and when they had spoken, forced them to decree it accordingly. They also presently sent ambassadors to Athens, both to show that it was fit for them to do what they had done, and also to dissuade such Corcyreans as were fled thither of the other faction, from doing any thing to their prejudice, lest there should be a counter revolution.

* Dr. Arnold supposes the silver stater, or tetradrachm, to be meant, which is worth, in our coin, between three shillings and three shillings and sixpence; the tetradrachms vary considerably in weight. The golden stater, which was worth twenty drachms, ought therefore to be worth from fifteen shillings to seventeen shillings and sixpence; but a specimen in the British Museum weighs 132⅘ grains, which is about 9½ grains more than a sovereign. Silver therefore seems to have borne a higher value in relation to gold in Attica than it does in England.

"When these arrived, the Athenians apprehended both the ambassadors themselves, as seditious persons, and also all those Corcyreans whom they had there prevailed with, and sent them to custody in Ægina. In the mean time, upon the coming in of a galley of Corinth with ambassadors from Lacedæmon, that party that had the rule assailed the commons, and overcame them in fight; and night coming on, the commons fled into the citadel, and the higher parts of the city, where they rallied themselves, and encamped, and made themselves masters of the haven called the Hillaic haven. But the others seized on the market-place (where also the most of them dwelt) and on the haven on the side toward the continent.

"The next day they skirmished a little with shot*, and both parts sent abroad into the villages to solicit the slaves, with promise of liberty, to take their parts; and the greatest part of the slaves took part with the commons, and the other side had an aid of 800 men from the continent.

"The next day but one they fought again, and the people had the victory, having the odds both in strength of places, and in number of men. And the women also manfully assisted them, throwing tiles from the houses, and enduring the tumult, even beyond the condition of their sex. The Few began to fly about twilight, and fearing lest the people should attack, and at the first onset gain possession of the arsenal, and put them to the sword, to stop their passage, set fire to the houses in the market-place, and those adjoining them, sparing neither their own property nor others. Much goods of merchants were hereby burnt, and the whole city, if the wind had risen and carried the flame that way, had been in danger to have been destroyed. Then ceasing from battle, forasmuch as both parties were at rest, they set watch for the night. And the Corinthian galley

* Arrows, darts, stones, and the like missile weapons.

stole away, because the people had gotten the victory, and most of the auxiliaries got over privily to the continent.

"The next day Nicostratus the son of Diotrephes, an Athenian commander, came in with twelve galleys and five hundred Messenian men of arms from Naupactus, and both negotiated a reconciliation, and induced them (to the end they might agree) to condemn ten of the principal authors of the sedition (who presently fled) and to let the rest alone, with articles both between themselves and with the Athenians, to esteem friends and enemies the same as the Athenians did. When he had done this, he would have been gone, but the people persuaded him before he went to leave behind him five of his galleys, thought better to keep their adversaries from stirring, and to take as many of theirs, which they would man with Corcyreans, and send with him. To this he agreed, and they made a list of those that should embark, consisting altogether of their enemies. But these fearing to be sent to Athens, took sanctuary in the temple of Castor and Pollux; but Nicostratus endeavoured to raise them, and spake to them, to put them into courage: but when he could not prevail, the people (arming themselves on pretence that their diffidence to go along with Nicostratus proceeded from some evil intention) took away their arms out of their houses, and would also have killed some of them, such as they chanced on, if Nicostratus had not hindered them. Others also, when they saw this, took sanctuary in the temple of Juno, and they were in all above four hundred. But the people, fearing some innovation, got them by persuasion to rise, and conveying them into the island that lieth over against the temple of Juno, sent them their necessaries thither.

"The sedition standing in these terms, the fourth

or fifth day after the putting over of these men into the island, arrived the Peloponnesian fleet from Cyllene, where since their voyage of Ionia, they had lain at anchor, to the number of three and fifty sail. Alcidas had the command of these, as before, and Brasidas came with him as a counsellor. And having first put in at Sybota, a haven of the continent, they came on the next morning by break of day toward Corcyra.

"The Corcyreans being in a great tumult and fear, both of the seditious within, and of the invasion without, made ready threescore galleys, and still as any of them were manned, sent them out against the enemy; whereas the Athenians had advised them to give leave to them to go forth first, and then the Corcyreans to follow after with the whole fleet together. But when their scattered ships neared the enemy, two of them immediately deserted, and in others they that were aboard went together by the ears, and nothing was done in due order. The Peloponnesians, seeing their confusion, opposed themselves to the Corcyreans with twenty galleys only, the rest they set in array against the twelve galleys of Athens.

"The Corcyreans having come disorderly up, and by few at once, were of their own fault in much distress; but the Athenians, fearing an overmatch of numbers, and that they should be surrounded, did not charge upon the close array, nor on the centre of the enemy; but attacked the wing, and sunk one of their galleys: and when the Peloponnesians afterwards had put their fleet into a circular figure, they then went about and about it, endeavouring to put them into disorder; which they that were fighting against the Corcyreans perceiving, and fearing such another chance as befel them formerly at Naupactus, went to their aid, and uniting themselves, came upon the Athenians all together. But they backing their

oars, retreated with their prows to the enemy, that the Corcyreans should take that time to escape in; they themselves in the mean time going as leisurely back as was possible, and keeping the enemy still opposed to them. Such was this battle, and it ended about sun-set.

"The Corcyreans fearing lest the enemy, in pursuit of their victory, should have come directly against the city, or take aboard the men which they had put over into the island, or do them some other mischief, fetched back the men into the temple of Juno again, and guarded the city. But the Peloponnesians, though they had won the battle, yet durst not invade the city, but having taken thirteen of the Corcyrean galleys, went back into the continent from whence they had set forth. The next day they came not unto the city, no more than before, although it was in great tumult and affright: and though also Brasidas (as it is reported) advised Alcidas to it, but had not equal authority: but only landed soldiers at the promontory of Leucimna, and wasted their territory.

"In the mean time the people of Corcyra, fearing extremely lest those galleys should come against the city, not only conferred with those in sanctuary, and with the rest, about how the city might be preserved, but also induced some of them to serve on shipboard. For notwithstanding the confusion they had still manned thirty galleys, in expectation that the fleet of the enemy should have entered. But the Peloponnesians having been wasting of their fields till it was about noon, went their ways again. And during the night the Corcyreans had notice by beacon-fires of threescore Athenian galleys coming toward them from Leucas, which the Athenians, upon intelligence of the sedition, and of the fleet to go to Corcyra under Alcidas, had sent to aid them, under the conduct of Eurymedon the son of Thucles.

"The Peloponnesians, therefore, as soon as night

came, sailed speedily home, keeping still the shore, and causing their galleys to be carried over at the Isthmus of Leucas, that they might not come in sight as they doubled it. But the people of Corcyra, hearing of the Attic galleys coming in, and the going off of the Peloponnesians, brought into the city the Messenians*, who till this time had been kept outside the walls, and appointing the galleys which they had equipped to come about into the Hillaic haven; they in the mean time slew all the contrary faction they could lay hands on, and also afterwards threw overboard out of the same galleys all those (i. e., of the oligarchical party,) they had before persuaded to embark, and so went thence. And coming to the temple of Juno, they persuaded fifty of those that had taken sanctuary, to refer themselves to a legal trial; all which they condemned to die. But most of those who had taken sanctuary, that is, all those that were not induced to stand to trial by law, when they saw what was done, killed one another there-right in the temple: some hanged themselves on trees; every one, as he had means, made himself away. And for seven days together that Eurymedon staid there with his threescore galleys, the Corcyreans did nothing but kill such of their city as they took to be their enemies, laying to their charge indeed that they had conspired against the commons, but some among them were slain upon private hatred, and some by their debtors, for the money which they had lent them. All forms of death were then seen, and (as in such cases it usually falls out) whatsoever had happened at any time, happened also then, and more. For the father slew his son, men were dragged out of the temples, and then slain hard by; and some walled up within the temple of Bacchus†, died there. So cruel was this

* That came with Nicostratus.

† The Greeks had rather singular notions as to the sanctity of

sedition; and it seemed so the more, because it was among these men the first.

"For afterwards all Greece, as a man may say, was in commotion; and quarrels arose every where between the patrons of the commons, that sought to bring in the Athenians, and the Few* that desired to bring in the Lacedæmonians. Now in time of peace they could have no pretence, nor would have been so forward to call them in; but being war, and confederates to be had for either party, both to hurt their enemies, and strengthen themselves, such as desired alteration easily got foreign help to their end. And many heinous things happened in the cities through this sedition, which though they have been before, and shall be ever, as long as human nature is the same, yet they are more violent, or more tranquil, and of different kinds, according to the several† conjunctures at which they occur. For in peace and prosperity both cities and private men are better minded, because they fall not into such emergencies as constrain men to do things, whether they will or no; but war taking away the affluence of daily necessaries, is a most violent master, and conformeth most men's passions to the present occasion. So sedition prevailed in the cities, and those that fell into it later, having heard what had been done in the former, far exceeded them in newness of conceit, both for the art

temples. To kill a person within the sacred precincts, or to drag him away violently, was held sacrilegious; but to wall a suppliant up, and thus preventing his escape, to starve him to death, seems to have been considered venial, since this mode of proceeding was adopted, in a former instance, against the king of Sparta, Pausanias. In the latter case, however, the Delphic oracle pronounced the act a pollution, and ordered that amends should be made for it to the goddess whose temple was thus desecrated. See Thucyd. i. 134.

* τοῖς ὀλίγοις, not few in number, but the leaders of the oligarchical party.

† Μεταβολαι τῶν ξυντυχιῶν, changes of the state of things.

of assailing, and for the strangeness of their revenges. The received value of names imposed for signification of things, was changed into arbitrary: for inconsiderate boldness, was counted true-hearted manliness; provident deliberation, a handsome fear; modesty, the cloak of cowardice; to be wise in every thing, to be lazy in every thing. A furious suddenness was reputed a point of valour. To re-advise for the better security, was held for a fair pretext of tergiversation. He that was fierce, was always trusty; and he that contraried such a one, was suspected. He that did insidiate, if it took, was a wise man; but he that could find out the trap, a cleverer man than he: but he that had been so provident as not to need to do one or the other, was said to be a dissolver of fellowship, and one that stood in fear of his adversary. In brief, he that could out-strip another in the doing of an evil act, or that could persuade another thereto, that never meant it, was commended. To be kin to another, was not to be so near as to be of his fellowship, because these were ready to undertake any thing, without standing upon pretexts. For these fellowships * looked not to benefits consistent with the existing laws, but to self-aggrandizement, contrary to them. And as for mutual trust amongst them, it was confirmed not so much by divine law †, as by the communication of guilt. And what was handsomely spoken by their adversaries, they received with an eye to their actions, to see whether they were too strong for them or not, and not ingenuously. To be revenged was in more

* Hobbes seems to consider these ἑταιρίαι as associations of traders or artisans, such as our corporate companies were in their origin; which is clearly wrong. They would seem to have been more like the clubs of the French Revolution, formed for the advocacy of certain opinions, or to promote the safety, and increase the influence of the several members, by enabling them to act in concert.

† By oath.

request, than never to have received injury. And oaths of reconcilement (if any were) given by one to another, because in the present conjuncture they could do nought else, were binding, as long as the parties had no power otherwise; but upon opportunity, he that first durst, if he saw an unguarded place, thought his revenge sweeter by the trust than if he had taken the open way. And this course was valued both for its security, and because he that circumvented his adversary by fraud, assumed to himself withal a mastery in point of wit. And dishonest men for the most part are sooner called able, than simple men honest. And men are ashamed of this title, but take a pride in the other. The cause of this is desire of rule, out of avarice and ambition, and the zeal of contention * from those two proceeding. For such as were of authority in the cities, both of the one and the other faction, the one under the decent pretext of political equality of the many, the other of moderate aristocracy, though in words they seemed to be servants of the public, they made it in effect but the prize of their contention. And striving by whatsoever means to overcome, both ventured on most horrible outrages, and

* Φιλονεικία, properly that spite which reigneth in two adversaries whilst they contend, or eagerness in striving. "That is to say, superadded to the definite motives which lead men to embark in political contests; they contract, when once embarked in them, a party spirit wholly distinct from the objects of their party, and which is sometimes transmitted to their descendants, even when no notions of the original cause of quarrel are preserved. Such was the case with the factions of the Circus at Constantinople, and with those deadly feuds which have prevailed from time to time among the lower classes in Ireland. In the outrages committed some years ago by the parties called Caravats and Shanavests, neither the persons who were executed for these outrages, nor any one else could tell what was the dispute. It was notorious who were Caravats and who were Shanavests, and this was all." Arnold.

revenged them even beyond the provocations, without any regard of justice, or the public good, but limiting them, each faction, by their own appetite: and stood ready, whether by unjust sentence, or with their own hands, when they should get the uppermost, to satisfy their spite. So that neither side thought to do any thing by honest means; but they were best spoken of, that could pass a business though against the grain, with fair words. The neutrals of the city were destroyed by both factions; partly because they would not side with them, and partly for envy that they should so escape.

"Thus was wickedness on foot in every kind, throughout all Greece, by the occasion of the party conflicts. Sincerity (whereof there is much in a generous nature) was laughed down, and vanished. And it was far the best course to stand distrustfully against each other, for neither were words powerful, nor oaths terrible enough to assure reconciliation. And being all of them, the more they considered, the more desperate of security, they rather contrived how to avoid a mischief, than were able to rely on any man's faith. And for the most part such as had the least wit had the best success; for both their own defect, and the subtilty of their adversaries, putting them in a great fear to be overcome in words, or at least in prevansidiation, by their enemies' great craft, they therefore went roundly to work with them, with deeds. Whereas the other, thinking in their arrogance that they should be aware in time, and that they needed not to take by force what they might do by plot, were thereby unprovided, and so the more easily slain.

"In Corcyra then were most of these evils committed first: and besides these, all that men might perpetrate in retaliation, who had been tyrannically governed by that very party which they now saw in their power; or that men just freed from their accus-

tomed poverty, and greedily coveting their neighbour's goods, would against justice agree to; or which men, assailing each other, not upon desire of gain, but as equal against equal, in the intemperance of anger would cruelly and inexorably execute. And the common course of life being at that time confounded in the city, the nature of man, which is wont even against law to do evil, gotten now above the law, was very ready to display itself as intemperately passionate, too strong for justice, and an enemy to all superiority. For they would never else have preferred revenge to sanctity, and gain to that condition of justice, in which envy would have lost its power to do harm. And for the laws common to all men in such cases (which, as long as they be in force, give hope to all that suffer injury), men desire not to leave them standing, against the need a man in danger may have of them, but by their revenges on others, to be beforehand in subverting them*.

"Such were the passions of the Corcyreans first of all other Grecians, towards one another in the city. And Eurymedon and the Athenians departed with their galleys. Afterwards such of the Corcyreans as had fled (for there escaped about five hundred of them) having seized on the forts in the continent, established themselves in their own territory on the mainland opposite the island, and from thence came over and robbed the islanders, and did them much hurt; and there grew a great famine in the city. They likewise sent ambassadors to Lacedæmon and Corinth, to negotiate concerning their return; and when they could get nothing done, having gotten boats, and some auxiliary soldiers, they passed a

* The eighty-fourth chapter of the third book (which is contained in this paragraph) has recently been pronounced spurious by several distinguished critics. See the question discussed by Dr. Arnold, vol. i. p. 608.

while after to the number of about six hundred into the island. Where when they had set their boats on fire, that they might have no hope but in the making themselves masters of the country, they went up into the hill Istone, and having there fortified themselves with a wall, infested those within, and were masters of the territory *.

"In the seventh year of the war† Eurymedon and Sophocles, after their departure from Pylus with the Athenian fleet towards Sicily, arriving at Corcyra, joined with those of the city, and made war upon those Corcyreans which lay encamped upon the hill Istone, and which, after the sedition, had come over, and made themselves masters of the country, and done much harm: and having assaulted their fortification, took it. But the men all in one troop escaped to a certain high ground, and thence made their composition, which was this; 'that they should deliver up the foreigners that aided them; and that they themselves, having rendered their arms, should stand to the judgment of the people of Athens.' Hereupon the generals granted them truce, and transported them to the island of Ptychia, to be there in custody till the Athenians should send for them; with this condition, 'that if any one of them should be taken running away, then the truce to be broken for them all.' But the leaders of the commons of Corcyra, fearing lest the Athenians would not kill those who were sent to them, devise against them this plot. To some few of those in the island they secretly send their friends, and instruct them to say, as if forsooth, it were for good will, that it was their best course with all speed to get away (and withal to offer to provide them of a boat), for that the Athenian commanders intended verily to deliver them to the Corcyrean people.

* Thucyd. iii. 70, 85. † B.C. 425.

"When they were persuaded to do so, and that a boat was treacherously prepared, as they rowed away they were taken, and the truce being now broken, were all given up into the hands of the Corcyreans. It did much further this plot, by giving to the pretence held out an appearance of reality, and making the agents in it less fearful, that the Athenian generals evidently did not wish the men to be carried home by others, whilst they themselves were to go into Sicily, and the honour of it be ascribed to those that should convoy them. The Corcyreans having received them into their hands, imprisoned them in a large edifice, from whence afterwards they took them out by twenty at a time, and made them pass through a lane of men of arms, bound together, and receiving strokes and thrusts from those on either side, according as any one espied his enemy. And to hasten the space of those that went slowliest on, others were set to follow them with whips.

"They had taken out of the room in this manner, and slain, to the number of threescore, before they that remained knew it, who thought they were but removed, and carried to some other place. But when they knew the truth, some or other having told them, they then cried out to the Athenians, and bid them, if they wished their death, kill them themselves; and refused any more to go out of the building, nor would suffer they said, as long as they were able, any man to come in. But neither had the Corcyreans any purpose to force entrance by the door, but getting up to the top of the house, uncovered the roof, and threw tiles, and shot arrows at them. They in prison defended themselves as well as they could; but many also slew themselves with the arrows shot by the enemy, by thrusting them into their throats, and strangling themselves with the cords of certain beds that were in the room, and with halters made of

their own garments rent in pieces. And having continued most part of the night (for night overtook them in the action), partly strangling themselves by all such means as they found, and partly shot at from above, they all perished. When day came, the Corcyreans laid them one across another* in carts, and carried them out of the city. And of their wives, as many as were taken in the fortification, they made bond-women. In this manner were the Corcyreans that kept the hill†, brought to destruction by the commons. And thus ended this far-spread sedition, for so much as concerned this present war: for other seditions there remained nothing worth the relation‡."

It would be difficult to find a more thoroughly hateful state of society than that which appears from this passage, and from the description of the plague of Athens, to have existed in Greece at this period. The picture, it is to be remembered, comes to us on the authority of one whose impartiality, and deep powers of observation are alike unquestioned, no splenetic, no visionary, but one who had mixed largely and in high station among the stirring times of which he writes. The most astonishing circumstance connected with the depravity here exhibited, is the short period in which it appears to have shot up into such rank growth. We possess, it is true, little knowledge of any thing but the public acts of Greece anterior to the Peloponnesian war, at which time the contemporary historian, and still more the contemporary comedian, Aristophanes, supply us with abundant notices of private life, which are continued and

* Φορμηδὸν, signifieth properly, after the manner that mats, or hurdles are platted.

† Istone.

‡ Thucyd. iv. 46, 48.

enlarged by the philosophers and orators. Still, as far as we have the means of judging, there seems no reason to ascribe to the Greeks, until about the Peloponnesian war, a smaller share of morality and religion than has usually been found among heathen nations. Whence then in so short a time this utter loss of moral sense and disruption of the bonds of society? The question is not an easy one to answer, but the substance of the best answer that we can give is comprised in the introductory chapter to this volume.

To supply a series of parallels to this domestic contest is scarcely possible. Among insurrections and civil wars, events of equal atrocity and more astounding magnitude might be found, but scarcely events of the same character. We naturally turn first to the other great nation of antiquity. Here we are warned against the most obvious comparison by an eminent scholar of the present day. After speaking of the dangers incident to the struggle between the aristocracy and the people in that often-occuring form of a nation's early existence, when it is divided into a privileged race or caste, whose power is founded on conquest, and a commonalty, personally free but politically dependent, as were the Saxons while the distinction between Saxon and Norman blood continued in England; after speaking of the dangers which beset that contest which is sure to take place when the spread of wealth and knowledge has equalized the personal qualities of the rulers and the ruled, he continues, "If the nation escapes these, either originally or finally, it enters upon its state of manhood, and is exposed to a somewhat different succession of struggles. The contest is then between property and numbers, and wherever it has come to a crisis, I know not that it has in any instance terminated favourably. Such was the state of Greece

plebeians, happily for Rome, were free. Here each party had a definite object to contend for: the one, the relaxation of oppressive privileges; the other to maintain unimpaired the immunities and dignity of their order; and each had wisdom, the one to be moderate in its demands, the other to concede moderately, rather than hazard the very being of the state by an appeal to arms. No personal or political hatred inflamed the passions, unless where some enslaved debtor was maddened by suffering, or some hot-headed patrician, such as the old legends of Rome represented Coriolanus to be, became impatient that the swinish multitude should believe they had rights: each party felt that the other was necessary to its welfare, and though driven to violence, the plebeians still looked up with respect and affection to their hereditary aristocracy.

As these disturbances belong to an earlier, so the civil wars of Marius and Sylla, and those which ended in the establishment of the Empire, belong, we think, to a more advanced stage of society than does the Corcyrean sedition, which is compared to them in the foregoing quotation. Rome had reached, and had passed the period at which a true democracy becomes impossible, except through the medium of representation; while at Corcyra, even when the popular faction was supreme, the government was an oligarchy, in respect of the *whole* population of the state, of which slaves and foreigners constituted, we may presume, a considerable majority. The legislative and the armed body were identical; a part of that body might triumph over the rest, but no one could mount on the shoulders of the people to a military despotism, and then kick away the step by which he had risen. No leader seems to have risen to the absolute power of Marius, or Sylla, or Cæsar; if there had, it must have been by consent of

the prevailing party, who would therefore have been implicated in his actions. At Rome the case was very different: the legislative authority centred in the resident citizens, the military power of the state was more than equally shared with them by the provincial armies, composed partly of barbarians, partly of subjects of the state, entitled to a greater or lesser share of the privileges of citizenship, but not to vote in the assemblies of the people, and partly, it is true, of citizens, but those long absent from the seat of government, and careless about politics, but devoted to the leader who had led them on to plunder, honour, and victory. Some faction therefore was to be courted to gain place and power, but he who had gained them, and with them military command and influence, was in great measure independent of his former associates. Sylla and Marius were terrible to friends as well as foes, and it would be unfair to charge upon the Roman people the enormous crimes committed under the military tyrannies which they established.

If we look for parallels in modern history, the search will not be more successful. The domestic quarrels, as well as the structure of the Italian states, bear a close analogy to those of the Greek republics, and the contests of the oligarchical and democratic parties, and the influence of Sparta or Athens, as one or the other prevailed, may be closely exemplified by the bitter quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, and the interest exerted, by means of these parties, by the Pope and the Emperor. But full as is Italian history of desperate feuds, we cannot call to mind any one worthy to be compared with the transactions at Corcyra. The massacre, called the Sicilian Vespers, when 8000 French were surprised and slain in one night, by a simultaneous insurrection of the native Sicilians, is a memorable and frightful example of popular revenge; but the act of a people rising in

defence of its rights, atrocious as is such a method of asserting them, is not to be placed by the side of so cold-blooded and unprovoked, and faithless a massacre as that of the conquered Corcyreans. The massacre of St. Bartholomew might compete with it in point of treachery, but the ground of quarrel, and the relation of the contending parties, were entirely dissimilar; and it has been so fully described in a former volume of this series *, that any account of it here would be out of place.

The outrages committed in France by the insurgent peasantry, called Jacquerie, are unlike the massacres at Corcyra, inasmuch as they belong to an earlier stage of society, a stage again different from that contemplated by Dr. Arnold, when he speaks of the harmless nature of that earlier quarrel, in which property and numbers are united against property and birth. These risings, and the corresponding risings in England, were the acts of men without property, and many of them without a legal capability of acquiring it; men hostile to all the institutions of society, because to them society had been little but an engine of oppression. They were the efforts of brute force against all that is superior to itself; the rage of the untamed wolf after he has broken his chain. We say this not in justification of the conduct of their feudal lords, nor in censure of their earnest desire to break the yoke which bore them down to the ground. But whether their cause was good or bad, the method of their advocating it was brutal; and herein servile wars, if not most formidable as to their result, are most to be deprecated, because the passions of each party are sure to be exasperated to the uttermost, and because the insurgents, being without the pale of the laws of war, have no temptation to show mercy, and no hope but

* Paris, vol. i. chap. viii. ix. x.

in victory. And so to the Jacquerie, every thing more refined or exalted than themselves was the object of their deadly hate. They had no thought to raise themselves; that was beyond the grasp of their minds: but they were bent on pulling others down to their own level, so that distinctions the most inoffensive or laudable were as odious to them as the rank and power which had been misused to the oppression of the commonalty. "Be it known unto thee, by these presence, even the presence of Lord Mortimer, that I am the besom that must sweep the court clear of such filth as thou art. Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school: and whereas, before our fore-fathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used, and contrary to the king, his crown, and his dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb; and such abominable words as no christian can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters that they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison, and because they could not read thou hast hanged them; when indeed, only for that cause, they have been most worthy to live*."

This picture is somewhat highly coloured, but if the reader will consult Holinshed for the account of Wat Tyler's rebellion in 1381, he will find that there is good authority for it. "To recite what was done in every part of the realme, in time of these hellish troubles, it is not possible; but this is to be considered, that the rage of the commons was universallie

* Cade's speech to Lord Say, Henry VI. part ii. vol. iv. p. 7. The last sentence alludes to the law which gave to persons capitally convicted the benefit of clergy, that is, their lives were spared if they could read; it being presumed that none but clergy could do so.

such, as it might seem they had generallie conspired together to do what mischeefe they could devise. As among sundrie other, what wickednesse was it to compell teachers of children in grammar schooles to swear never to instruct any in their art! Again, they could never have a more mischeefous meaning than to burn and destroy all old and auncient monuments, and to murder and despatch out of the way all such as were able to commit to memorie either any new or old records. For it was dangerous among them to be known for one that was learned, and more dangerous if any man were found with a penner and inkhorn at his side, for such seldom escaped from them with life*." The fidelity with which Shakspeare has copied the chronicles may be readily exemplified from a variety of passages.

Cade. How now! who's there?

Smith. The clerk of Chatham; he can write, and read, and cast accompt.

Cade. O, monstrous! Come hither, sirrah. I must examine thee. What is thy name?

Clerk. Emmanuel.

Dick. They use to write it on the top of letters. 'Twill go hard with you.

Cade. Let me alone. Dost thou use to write thy name, or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest plain-dealing man?

Clerk. Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.

All. He hath confessed: away with him: he's a villain and a traitor.

Cade. Away with him, I say: hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck.

Henry VI., II. iv. 2.

It is time, however, to proceed to the historical evidence on which our statements of the excesses of the Jacquerie are founded.

* Holinshed, vol. ii. p. 746.

"Anon (A. D. 1358) there began a marvelouse trybulacion in the realme of France, for certayne people of the common villages, without any head or ruler, assembled togyder in Beauvoisin. In the beginning they passed nat a hundred in nombre; they sayd how the noblemen of the realme of Fraunce, knyghtes, and squyers, shamed the realme, and that it shulde be a grete wealth to distroy them all; and eche of them sayd it was true, and sayd alle with one voice,—Shame have he that doth nat his power to distroy all the gentylmen of the realme. Thus they gathered togyder without any other counsayle, and without any armure, saving with staves and knyves, and so went to the house of a knyght dwelling thereby, and brake up his house, and slew the knyght and the lady, and all his children, grete and small, and brent his house: and so dyd they to dyvers other castelles and good houses. And they multiplied so that they were a six thousand; and ever as they went forward they increased, for such lyke as they were fell ever to them: so that every gentylman fledde fro them, and took their wyves and chyldren with them, and fledde x or xx leages off to be in suretie, and left their houses voyde and their goods therein.—These myschevous people thus assembled without capitayne or armure, robbed, brent, and slew all gentylmen that they coude lay handes on, and forced and ravysshed ladyes and damoselles, and dyd such shameful dedes, that no humayn creature ought to think on any such, and he that dyd most mischiefe was most pleased with them, and greatest maister.—Whan the gentylmen of Beauvoisin, of Corbois, of Vermandois, and of other lands whereas these myschevous people were conversant, saw the woodnesse* among them, they sent for socours to their frendes into Flanders, to

* Frenzy. The adjective wood, or wode, is of common occurrence in the Scottish language.

Brabant, to Hainault, and to Bohemia: so there came fro all partes, and so all these gentylmen straungers assembled togyder, and dyd sette upon these people wher they might fynde them, and slew and hanged them upon trees by heapes. The kynge of Naver on a day slew of them mo than thre thousand, beside Clermont in Beauvoisin. It was time to take them up, for and they had been all togyder assembled, they were mo than an hundred thousand, and when they were demanded why they dyd so yvell dedes, they wolde answer and say, they could nat tell, but they did as they sawe other do, thinking thereby to have distroyed all the nobles and gentylmen of the world*."

It was the same spirit which somewhat later, in England, prompted that rebellion of Wat Tyler, of which we have above spoken. This was a servile war, produced by oppression and misery; a rising of the serfs against the nobles, "who hade grete fraunchise over the commons, and kepeth them in servage, that is to say, their tenants ought by custom to laboure the lordes landes, to gather and bring home theyr corne, and some to thrash and to fanne; and by servage to make theyr hay, and to hew theyr wood, and bring it home: all these things they ought to do by servage."—"These unhappy people beganne to stynie because they were kept in grete servage: and in the begynning of the world, they sayd, there were no bondmen; wherefore they mayntayned that none ought to be bonde, without he dyd treason to his lorde, as Lucifer dyd to God; but they sayd they coude have no such batayle, for they were nouther angels nor spirittes, but men formed to the similitude of their lordes. Of this imagynacyon was a folisshe priest of Kent, called Johan Ball, who wolde oft tymes, on the sondaye after masse, assem-

* Lord Berners' Froyssart, vol. i. chap. 182, 183

ble the people about him, and say thus, A ye good people, the mater goth nat well to passe in Englande, nor shall nat do tyll every thing be common; and that there be no vyllayns nor gentylmen, but that we be all unied togyder, and that the lordes be no greater maisters than we be. What have we deserved, or why sholde we be thus kept in servage? We be all come fro one father and one mother, Adam and Eve; whereby can they say or showe that they be gretter lordes than we be *?" Part of the matter of the priest's sermon was well enough, and the cause was good, if its supporters had been capable of self-government; but their object was to establish anarchy, not liberty, and none will be found hardy enough to regret their failure.

After dwelling so long on things which ought to be distinguished from the Corcyrean sedition, it is time now, if ever, to produce those which admit of being compared with it. We have but two to bring forward: the second bears a more than usual resemblance to it in respect of the events which took place; the first bears little resemblance to it in respect of events, but is distinguished, if we may trust the contemporary historian, by a forgetfulness of natural ties, and relaxation of the bonds of society, very like that described by Thucydides, and not less worth noticing because the two arose out of entirely different circumstances, political and other. We allude to the seditions which tore Constantinople, especially under the reign of Justinian, ostensibly commencing in so petty a cause as the superiority of one colour to another in skill or fortune in the public games, in which those who contended for prizes, like our jockies, were distinguished by colours. "The race," says Gibbon, "in its first institution, was a simple contest of two chariots, whose drivers were distinguished by white

* Lord Berners' Froissart, vol. i. chap. 381.

and red liveries; two additional colours, a light green and a cerulean blue, were afterwards introduced, and as the races were repeated twenty-five times, one hundred chariots contributed in the same day to the pomp of the circus. The four factions soon acquired a legal establishment, and a mysterious origin, and their fanciful colours were derived from the various appearances of nature in the four seasons of the year; the red dog-star of summer, the snows of winter, the deep shades of autumn, and the cheerful verdure of the spring. Another interpretation preferred the elements to the seasons, and the struggle of the green and blue was supposed to represent the conflict of the earth and sea. Their respective victories announced either a plentiful harvest, or a prosperous navigation, and the hostility of the husbandmen and mariners was somewhat less absurd than the blind ardour of the Roman people, who devoted their lives and fortunes to the colour which they had espoused*."

With the seat of government, the amusements and the laws of the Roman circus were of course transferred to Constantinople. Here the mutual jealousy of the colours soon became combined with political and theological quarrels, and gave rise to disturbances which shook some emperors on their thrones, and vitally affected the peace and welfare of the state. The historian of the eastern empire has not traced the steps by which these graver discords became connected with the badges of amusement. A scholar of our own day has collected the scattered facts which bear on this question, but still without furnishing a satisfactory account of the origin or history of these divisions †. It may indeed be in-

* Decline and Fall, chap. xl.

† See 'Ueber die Parteien der Rennbahn vornehmlich im Byzantinischen Kaiserthum, von F. Wilken, in von Raumer's Historisches Taschenbuch.'

ferred from a passage in Procopius which we shall presently quote, that even in his time no account could be given, or reason be assigned, for so preposterous and blind an enmity. Nor will this surprise any person who reflects how easily an accidental quarrel is perpetuated by the adoption of a name or symbol, and how greedily the vulgar adopt the outward sign of faction, regardless of the principles which it indicates. Many bloody tumults and desperate feuds would have been spared to Ireland, if green and orange had never been adopted as the signs of national and religious hatred; for men would soon have ceased to care or inquire whether their neighbour went to church or chapel, had not the insulting badges of ascendancy and of dissent been continually paraded before their eyes. Any measure which did away with the use of party colours at elections would contribute largely to the quiet and well-being of England. Whatever raises an ostensible division between two classes of society should be sedulously discouraged by a government. The late Lord Liverpool, according to a current story, showed his prudence in wearing and recommending white hats, when that article of dress was the badge of a party violently opposed to his government. His intention was answered perfectly, and we now wear what we please without compromising our political faith.

Whatever was the origin and progress of the quarrel, we find in the early part of the sixth century the blue and green factions inveterately opposed to each other; the red having merged in the green, and the white in the blue. In the reign of Anastasius, the greens having brought concealed weapons into the theatre, massacred at once 3000 of their blue adversaries. A soldier of fortune, named Justin, succeeded Anastasius, and was succeeded by his own nephew, Justinian, during whose reign the blue fac-

tion gained the ascendancy: "A secret attachment to the family or sect of Anastasius was imputed to the greens; the blues were zealously devoted to the cause of orthodoxy and Justinian, and their grateful patron protected, above five years, the disorders of a faction, whose seasonable tumults overawed the palace, the senate, and capitals of the East*." "In every city," says the contemporary Procopius, "the people are from old time split into two factions, of the blue and green; but it is not long since this frenzy first possessed them, that in the cause of these names and colours in which they appear at the public games, they will spend their substance, expose their bodies to the bitterest indignities, and even consent to die by a shameful death. And while they fight with the opposite party they cannot tell the nature of their quarrel; being at the same time aware that even if they get the upper hand in battle, they will then be led to prison, and suffer a death of the worst tortures. This hatred of one man to another springs up without cause; but it remains endless, yielding neither to the rights of kindred or friendship, even though brethren, or such near relations, be partisans of these colours. And so long as their faction may have the uppermost, they care neither for things human nor divine, whether there be any impiety offered towards God, or whether the laws and government be violated by friend or enemy. For being themselves probably in want of common necessaries, they care not however deeply their country be injured, so long as their own party is likely to thrive by it. And even women share in this taint, not merely following their husbands, but even opposing them (if it shall so chance), though they go never to the theatres, and are not therefore excited by any such motives. So that I can call this nothing better than a disease of the mind†."

* Gibbon, chap. xl. † Procopius, Persic. vol. i. chap. 24

In the Anecdotes, he speaks again, and more fully, of the excesses committed by the blues under the protection of Justinian.

"They dressed their hair in a manner new to the Romans, letting the moustache and beard grow to an extreme length, like the Persians, while they shaved the fore part of their heads to the very temples, leaving it to grow as long and thick as it liked behind, in imitation of the Massagetæ, after whom they called this the Hunnish mode. In dress they affected a splendour beyond their means, defraying the cost at other men's expense. Their sleeves were made very close at the wrist, but up towards the shoulder they spread to an unutterable breadth*. So that in the theatre or hippodrome as often as they moved their hands in shouting, or encouraging others, as was their custom, they usually raised the limb to make fools think their bodies so robust, as that a garment of that size was necessary; not perceiving that by the emptiness of the garment the spareness of the body was the more shown. At first they carried arms, by night openly, and by day wore double-edged daggers concealed under their clothes; and coming out in companies as it grew dark, they stripped the better sort either in the open market or in passages, robbing those who fell into their hands of cloaks, golden brooches, or whatever else it might be. And some they even killed after robbing them, that they might tell no tales. By these doings all men were much grieved, and especially those that were not of the blue faction (for even they themselves went not scot-free), and from thenceforth men wore brass brooches, and girdles and cloaks beneath their condition.....There was no known crime which at this time was not committed and left unpunished. First they only killed their adversaries, then advancing in

* ἐς ἀφατόν τι εὖρος διεκέκυτο χρῆμα.

guilt they slew those who never had offended them. Many hired them to take off an enemy, which they did under pretence that the dead man was of the green party, though really he were quite unknown to them. And these things were not done in darkness as before, but in every hour of the day and place of the city, and before the eyes of the most eminent men: for being in no fear of punishment they cared not for concealment; but rather esteemed it a glory to those who laid claim to strength and manhood, that at one blow they could kill any unarmed person who came across them. In this slippery conjuncture no one had any hope of surviving; for no place was strong, no season sacred enough to warrant security; for even in the most honoured temples and assemblies men were slain, and no account taken of them. There was no more trusting either in friends or relations, for many perished by those who were nearest to them. And no inquiry was made into what had been done, but evil fell without warning, and no one helped him that was down. Law and contracts were no longer binding; every thing went according to the will of the strongest, and the state was like an unestablished tyranny, continually passing into new hands and beginning afresh. The minds of the authorities seemed to be amazed and enslaved by fear of one man; and the judges determined causes not according to law and justice, but as the parties in the suit were in good or bad odour with the parties in the state. For it was a capital offence that a judge should controvert the orders of the ruling party, the blues *."

Such was the state of Constantinople, the blues exulting in the royal favour, when, in January 532, the citizens were assembled in the hippodrome, the Emperor himself presiding over the games. The

* Procopius, Anecdota, chap. vii.

green faction disturbed the peace of the assembly by complaints, until at length Justinian was induced to enter into a parley with them by the voice of an officer called Mandator, a sort of civil aide-de-camp, whose duty was to receive and transmit his sovereign's orders. The dialogue which ensued is justly characterized by Gibbon, who has only given a short specimen of it, as the most singular that ever passed between a prince and his subjects.

We may premise, to account for the strange and unintelligible turn of many of the sentences, that the original is written in the corrupt Greek popularly spoken at Constantinople in the sixth century, and is full of allusions to which we possess no key, and words which the lexicographers have not explained, and sentences in which it is not possible to make out any grammatical construction. These difficulties, however, make the passage the more curious; inasmuch as they give reason to suppose that the dialogue was taken down as it occurred, and has not been polished in passing through the hands of historians.

Green. Long may you live, august Justinian. I am aggrieved, thou only good one. I cannot bear it. God knows, I dare not name him, lest it turn to his advantage and to my peril.

Mandator. Who is he? I know not.

Green. He who wrongs me will be found among the shoemakers *, thrice august.

Mand. No one wrongs you.

Green. One, and one only wrongs me. Mother of God, may he never lift his head again.

Mand. What man is he? I know not.

Green. You, and you only know, august Justinian, who wrongs me to-day.

Mand. If in truth there be any, I know him not.

* ἰς τα τζαγγαρία ἰψίσιται. Calopodius is meant. This name in Greek means a *last*; τζαγγάρης, a shoemaker; τζαγγαρία, shoemakers' offices. Not. in Theoph.

Green. Calopodius, the armour-bearer, wrongs me, Master of all.

Mand. Calopodius has no employment.

Green. Be he who he may, he shall die the death of Judas! God repay him his injuries to me, and that quickly!

Mand. You come, not to the games, but to insult your rulers

Green. If any wrong me, he shall die the death of Judas!

Mand. Be quiet, ye Jews, Manichæans, and Samaritans.

Green. Jews are we, and Samaritans? the mother of God is with all.

Mand How long will you heap curses on yourselves?

Green. If any deny that our master believes rightly, let him be accursed like Judas!

Mand. I tell you to be baptized in the name of one.

This seems to be a theological gibe at the unorthodox party, which they repel with anger There is an ambiguity in the reply, which it is not easy to translate, because, from the corruption of the text, or from the debased Greek in which the dialogue is chiefly written, we can come to no certain conclusion as to the real meaning. They express their willingness to be baptized according to order, and use a word which has been interpreted either to mean "Bring water,' or to confer on Justinian the appellation of "Pump There certainly was something in it which raised the Emperor's wrath, and extracted from him a reply more to the purpose than any yet made.

Mand In truth, if you are not quiet I will cut off your heads.

Green. Every one seeks power for his own safety, and if we speak because of our affliction, let not your greatness be indignant, for God endures all of us We having cause for what we say, give to every thing its

right name. We know not, thrice august, where the palace is, nor the condition of the state. We go not into the city, except to lay snares against the ass*, and I wish we went not for that, thrice august.

Mand. Every free man appears where he will, without danger.

Green. I hope I am free, yet I cannot appear without danger. And if a man is free, if he be suspected to be green, he shall be openly punished.

Mand. Hang-dogs, have you no mercy on your own lives!

Green. Abolish our colour—justice is at an end. Cease yourself from slaughter; then go to, we will be punished. See that blood-streaming fountain, and then punish whom you will. Verily human nature cannot bear these two things at once! O that Sabbatius† had never been born, then would he never have begotten such a murderer. This is the twenty-sixth murder that is done at Zeugma. In the morning he was at the theatre, in the evening he was slain, Master of all!

Blue. You alone contain all the murderers of this stadium.

Green. When do you depart without slaughter?

Blue. You slay and disturb us; for you alone contain all the murderers of the stadium.

Green. Justinian, master, they provoke and no one kills them. One cannot choose but understand this. Who killed the carpenter at Zeugma?

Mand. You did.

Green. Who killed the son of Epagathus, O Emperor?

Blue. You murdered him, and you accuse the blues.

Green. Now the Lord pity us! Truth is oppressed. I should like to enter into controversy with those who say that God directs affairs. Whence this misery?

Mand. God is not tempted by evil. (Θεὸς κακῶν ἀπείρασστος.)

Green. God is not tempted by evil. And who then

* ὅταν εἰς βοῤῥόνην καθέδζωμαι, or βουδρώνην. βορδων is an ass: the derivative seems only to occur here. Justinian appears to be meant, who was called the ass, from his habit of moving his ears. See the anecdotes, chap. 8. νωθεῖ ὄνῳ ἐμφερὴς μάλιστα, συχνα ὁι σειομενων των ωτων.

† The father of Justinian.

is it that wrongs me? If there be here philosopher or hermit, let him distinguish between the two.

Mand. Blasphemers, odious to God, when will you cease?

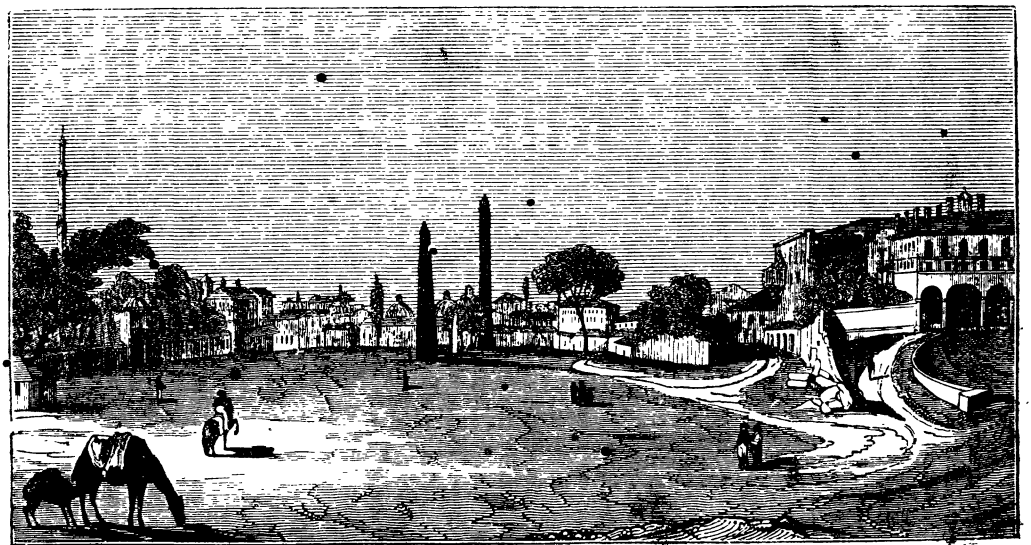
Green. If your greatness wishes it I keep quiet, though against my will. Thrice august, I know all—all—but I am silent. Justice, farewell, your time is up. I change sides and turn Jew; nay, better to turn Gentile than blue, God knows.

Blue. May I never see such a pollution! their envy troubles me.

Green. Dig up the bones of the spectators*.

After this the green party quitted the hippodrome, and left there the Emperor and the blues. The sequel may warn sovereigns against encouraging faction for their own ends. At this moment seven notorious murderers of both factions were paraded through the city previous to their execution. Five were immediately put to death, the other two obtained a respite by the breaking of the rope which should have hanged them. One of these surviving wretches belonged to the blue, the other to the green faction; and the parties forgot their enmity for a time to join in taking vengeance upon the government, which durst do justice upon their members. The consequence was a desperate tumult and insurrection, which lasted five days, during which a great part of the city was burnt; and which is known by the name of Nika, Conquer, from the watchword adopted by the rioters. For the history of it we must refer to Gibbon,

* Theophanes, p. 154, 6, ed. Par. 1655 This last taunt seems rather misplaced in the mouth of the greens, who had murdered 3,000 of their enemies in the theatre. It is not always easy to trace the connexion and meaning of the dialogue. This arises partly from the nature of the language, which very often is hardly grammatical, partly from its abruptness and frequent allusions to circumstances unexplained elsewhere. It is also to be found with several various readings in the notes to the Anecdotes of Procopius, vol. ii. p. 134, ed. Par. 1663.



Hippodrome of Constantinople.

or to the original authorities quoted by him, especially Procopius (Pers. i. 24) and Theophanes. At length Justinian found means to revive the mutual animosity of the factions; the blues resumed their allegiance to their protector, and the greens, left alone in the hippodrome, were attacked by the veteran troops of Belisarius, supported by their inveterate opponents. More than 30,000 persons are said to have perished in the massacre.

A curious anecdote connected with this subject is related elsewhere by Procopius. When Chosroes, the King of Persia, invaded Syria, he went to Apamea to see the sports of the circus; and having heard of Justinian's devotion to the blue faction, he thought it expedient to patronize the green. The blue charioteer at first had the advantage, the green following close upon his track. Chosroes thinking this was done on purpose to thwart him, became very angry, and cried out with threats, that it was not fair to give Cæsar the start*, and ordered the foremost to hold in their horses, and let the green get before them. This was done, and Chosroes and the greens plumed themselves on their victory.

The other example which we proposed to bring forward, which probably has already suggested itself to many of our readers, is one of the most memorable events of the French Revolution, the massacre of September 2—6, 1792. A short preface may serve to introduce it, since the history of the Revolution is pretty generally familiar.

In the summer of 1792 the executive power of the state was in effect wrested from the nominal authority, the Legislative Assembly, by a body of men styled the Commune, who had possessed themselves of the municipal government of Paris. In this body the leading persons were the flagitious tri-

* τὸν καίσαρα προτρέψασθαι τῶν ἄλλων ὀυ δ.ον. Procop. Pers. ii. xi.

umvirate, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. It is needless to speculate on the motives of such men. Whether the deed which we are about to relate was perpetrated only to further the ends of their party; whether, as some have said, it was prompted by the desire to get rid of those who might lay claim to a large mass of valuable personal property which had been seized from persons who had been denounced and arrested, and is said to have been embezzled by those disinterested patriots; or whether it were prompted solely by a savage thirst for blood;—which of these, or what other motive was the moving cause of this transaction, is of so little consequence towards determining its character, that it would be a waste of words to institute the inquiry. We proceed briefly to relate the facts.

At the end of August, 1792, the invasion of the Prussians, their advance to Verdun, and the capture of that strong place, created a great panic in the capital. Apprehensions were felt or expressed of a corresponding movement within the country on the part of the royalists, and the stern Danton asserted, in boding words, that it was necessary to strike fear into those who were disaffected to the republic. Before this time many *aristocrats*, chiefly priests and nobles, had been confined within the various prisons of Paris. Their numbers were now increased to a fearful extent by recent arrests of persons adverse to the Jacobin party, which then ruled in the Commune, until all these receptacles of human misery were filled to overflowing. The near approach of the Prussians was doubly favourable to the views of that party; it gave a colourable pretext for taking strong measures against all who could be represented as favouring the views of the invaders, and a reason for summoning to the field the citizens who could be called on to bear arms. The city being thus cleared of a large portion of those

who were most able, and probably most inclined to interfere by force in the cause of justice and humanity, a free and safe course was left open to the fury of that turbulent party, whose yoke bore so heavy upon the liberated nation. It was determined by the junta in authority, that the safety of France required the massacre of the prisoners; and in the Marseillois and the mob of the capital, fit agents of the bloody mandate were readily found.

The total number of persons confined in the Parisian prisons is so differently stated that it is no easy matter even to approximate to the truth; it is estimated by Scott (vol. ii. p. 41) at about 8000. Early on the morning of September 2, news arrived of the capture of Verdun by the Prussians. This struck a terror into Paris, by which the projectors of the massacre hastened to profit. The barriers were shut, the tocsin sounded, the alarm-gun fired. The prisons of Les Carmes, the Abbaye, and La Force, were first attacked, not in consequence of any general popular impulse; not by multitudes, such as had carried the Bastile and the Tuileries against superior arms and discipline, but by a crew of ruffians, composed partly of Marseillois, partly of the savage mob of Paris, in number not perhaps much exceeding a hundred, and goaded, it is said, with wine and spirits mixed with stimulating and maddening drugs. Armed with pikes, sabres, and similar weapons, they beset the prison-doors to the sound of the Marseillois hymn, and demanded that the conspirators, as they called them, should be delivered into their hands: and the gaolers offered no resistance to their entrance.

Les Carmes, the Carmelite convent, had been converted into a prison for suspected ecclesiastics. This was the first object of attack; and, without parley, or the pretence of trial or inquiry, the murderers burst in and began to fire on their victims. "Where," it was asked, "is the Archbishop of Arles?" That

prelate advanced boldly, and was cut down without his uttering a word of complaint. Others were hunted round the gardens, and shot like wild beasts; some escaped over the walls. At last, to proceed in a more orderly manner, and give less opportunity for escape, the survivors were all collected in the church, and led down two by two to be executed in the garden. The Bishop of Saintes, whose leg had been broken by a bullet, is reported to have said, "Gentlemen, I am ready to go and die, like the rest; but you see the state in which I am, my leg is broken; I beg that you will assist me, and I will go willingly to execution." The difficulty of obtaining correct information concerning these events may be estimated from the statements of the number of ecclesiastics who perished in Les Carmes. A royalist account raises it to 1168, a republican account reduces it to 163*. If it were necessary to make choice of either we should not hesitate to adopt the smaller number.

The Abbaye and La Force were the next objects of attack. Here there was some mockery of judicial observances. The form of trial was brief enough; a few armed ruffians constituted themselves a tribunal, before which the prisoners were led one by one. The investigation seldom went much beyond asking the name of the person, and referring to the charges alleged against him in the gaoler's register. If these afforded ground for the suspicion of incivism, and the judges, as was almost always the case, decreed his death, their sentence, to prevent the dangerous efforts of despair, was conveyed in the equivocal terms, "Give the prisoner freedom," or, "Convey him to La Force," if he were confined at the Abbaye, and *vice versâ*. He was then led from the room, and struck down, for the most part, before he reached the

* Dulaure 'Evenements de la Révolution Française,' vol. ii. p. 192.

court-yard, with eager cruelty. Women as well as men mingled in this frightful scene, and inflicted the most loathsome indignities on the mangled bodies.

These proceedings were virtually authorized and encouraged by the presence of deputies from the Commune, wearing the municipal scarf, but nominally charged to select and deliver those who were imprisoned for debt. Not content with this negative sanction, Billaud Varennes, who was one of them, openly stimulated the murderers, promising them not only the plunder of the dead bodies, but the farther gratification of a louis per day, as the reward of their good service. And it appears from the records of the time, that this money was actually paid. Yet much of the trifling property found on the persons of the slain was delivered up, it is said, for the use of the state; as if the actors of these horrors, by some strange caprice, had professed to be really disinterested.

An officer named Saint Meard, who was confined in the Abbaye, has written, under the title, 'Mon Agonie de trent-huit heures,' an account of the feelings and conduct of the prisoners during the frightful period of suspense, which elapsed between the commencement of the massacres, and the moment when the fatal summons reached each of the sufferers. "Our most important occupation," he says, "was to observe in what manner death might be met most easily when we should enter the place of slaughter. From time to time we sent one of our number to a turret-window, to let us know how the miserable men who were destroyed met their fate, and to consider, from what they told us, how it would be best for us to conduct ourselves. They said that those who stretched out their hands protracted their sufferings, because the sabre strokes were deadened before they reached the head; that sometimes their hands and arms were even hewn off before they fell, and that those

who placed their hands behind their backs would suffer least. It was on such horrid particulars as these that we had to deliberate. We calculated the advantages of this last-named position, and in turn advised each other to assume it when our turn should arrive." It is hard to conceive a situation more trying to human fortitude. The prisoners generally met their fate with firmness, and in many instances boldly avowed and gloried in the principles and hereditary honours which were the sure passports to their fate. In some few instances the murderers relented. One or two men were preserved by the devoted interposition of female relatives. But very few of those who were imprisoned on political grounds lived to relate the horrors which they had passed through. Saint Meard, although he boldly avowed himself a royalist, was one of the number *.

For four days did this frightful scene continue, unsanctioned by authority, save the instigation and half-expressed approbation of the Commune, perpetrated by an insignificant mob, who, with the smallest portion of energy, might have been overpowered at once. The Legislative Assembly sent some of their members to remonstrate; men known as Jacobins, who came back, and related that their interference had been ineffectual, and no further steps were taken The National Guard remained quiet, waiting the orders of their superiors. Meanwhile, amid this fear or lethargy, for neither the Assembly nor the Guard viewed this butchery with favourable eyes, the judges and executioners ate, drank, and slept, and returned unmolested and with new vigour to their several functions.

The thirst of blood, once indulged, appears to have given rise to a sort of intoxication. The mob attacked

* We have not seen his book itself, but there are extracts from it in Dulaure, and among them a very curious account of his examination before the tribunal, vol. ii. p. 198.

even the Bicetre, a prison containing none but criminals and lunatics. Here only they experienced resistance; and the resistance was desperate. The gaolers made common cause with the prisoners against the assailants; the stones and iron bars of the building supplying them with weapons. They made good their defence until cannon were brought against them, and they were mowed down in the mass.

Of the number of persons who perished in this fearful scene no exact account has ever been given. It is said, however, that not more than 200 or 300 of the prisoners committed for political offences are known to have escaped; and on the smallest reckoning the slain amounted to 2000 or 3000. Some estimate them at double that number. Truchat stated to the Legislative Assembly that 4000 had fallen. One statement, which is introduced only to show the tendency to exaggeration in these matters, raised the number to 12,800. Those who were imprisoned for debt were set free by order of the Commune; and to these we must look to make up the difference between the number of the slain and the total number of 8000, said to have been in prison on September 2. The bodies were interred in trenches, prepared, it is said, beforehand by the Commune, but their bones were subsequently transferred to the Catacombs. "In these melancholy regions, while other relics of mortality lie exposed all around, the remains of those who perished in the massacres of September are alone excluded from the public eye. The vault in which they repose is closed with a screen of freestone, as if relating to crimes unfit to be thought of even in the proper abode of death, and which France would willingly hide in oblivion*."

* Scott, Life of Napoleon, vol. ii. p. 47. The authorities for this account are Mignet, Hist. de la Revolution Française; Montgaillard, Hist. de France; and Dulaure, as above quoted.

Chapter V.

Character of Cleon—Blockade and capture of the Lacedæmonians at Pylos—Comparison with the capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon—Greek comedy—Sketch of the Knights of Aristophanes—Subsequent history of Cleon—Account of the Popish Plot—Character and history of Titus Oates—Mutilation of the Hermæ at Athens.

Within very few years after the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, a striking change took place both in the measures and the ministers of the state. Miltiades, Aristides, Themistocles, Cimon, Pericles, were all pre-eminent in personal merit, and most of them possessed of hereditary distinction also. Nicias, a man of rank and virtue, succeeded in appearance to the high station of Pericles, but not to his talents and influence over his turbulent countrymen, who, after having been long governed by the most illustrious of Grecian statesmen, threw themselves into the arms of the worst of Grecian demagogues. After Pericles' death, popular favour veered for a short time between Eucrates, a flax-seller, and Lysicles, a sheep-seller; until a man, low equally in origin, habits, and education, carried away the prize, and employed it, as the folly of his supporters deserved, to the ruin of the state. "The son of a tanner, and himself bred to the trade; without those generous feelings which seem inherent in high birth, and without that regard for character which it is the purpose of education to inspire, Cleon possessed those corporeal powers, which, in the eyes of a mob, often supply the place of both:—with a

bulky body, a voice potent even beyond the extreme extent of value attached to such a qualification among the Greeks, with a most republican indifference to all exterior decorations of person, and a face bearing on it the marks of vulgar intemperance, Nature herself seems to have formed Cleon for a demagogue. His interior qualifications were just what his exterior promised; he being, as Mr. Mitford observes, "of extraordinary impudence and little courage; as slack in the field as he was forward and noisy in the assembly, and as base in practice as he was corrupt in principle. That such a man should ever have stood in the situation of head of a party seems to us almost incredible: but he possessed one redeeming qualification in an eminent degree; and among a nation which pardoned every thing to the pleasure of indulging its ears, the coarse but ready eloquence of Cleon, exerted in those ways which were most calculated to please an Athenian audience—in boasts of his own integrity, and accusations of all the respectable men of rank—this formed a splendid addition to his character, which threw into the shade all his other defects *." By this man's persuasion that atrocious decree was passed, which condemned to death every male of the Mityleneans, and reduced to slavery their wives and children: a fate but just averted by the repentance of the Athenians whose vengeance nevertheless was gratified by the execution of a thousand prisoners. Through his folly and presumption, the opportunity was lost of concluding an honourable and advantageous peace, when good fortune and the military talent of Demosthenes had thrown the Spartan army at Sphacteria into their power. This event, which raised Cleon's popularity to its greatest height, has also made known his character to all ages. His name would have been comparatively little bruited abroad by the grave cen-

* Mitchell's Aristophanes, vol. i. p. 139.

sure of Thucydides; but the satire of Aristophanes has conferred on it a most undesirable celebrity.

Sphacteria, now called Sphagia*, is a small island situated in the centre of the mouth of the bay of Pylos, well known in modern history by the name of Navarino, which it nearly closes, leaving a narrow passage on either side. In the year B. C. 425, in the seventh year of the war, the Athenian fleet, under the command of Eurymedon and Demosthenes, raised a small fort at Pylos, intending to garrison it with Messenians, the obstinate and hereditary enemies of Lacedæmon†. The fleet then sailed away, leaving only five ships and their crews, under the command of Demosthenes. The Spartan government immediately sent a force to attack him by land and sea; and to make the blockade effectual, they placed a body of Lacedæmonians in the island, meaning to close both the inlets of the harbour with their ships. But the Athenian fleet returned in time to save their little garrison; and a naval victory made them masters of the sea, and of the destiny of the 420 Lacedæmonians thus shut up on the uninhabited and uncultivated island of Sphacteria.

Consternation ran high in Sparta on receiving this news, for many persons of the first families were among the detachment thus entrapped; and an embassy was sent to Athens to negotiate for peace. A truce was concluded in the first instance, by which the Spartans were still detained on the island, but were to be supplied with a regulated allowance of food; and advantageous and honourable terms were offered, on which a lasting pacification might be founded. But Cleon induced the Athenians to require more than the Spartans would, or perhaps could, consent to or fulfil.

* With respect to the exact locality of Sphacteria, see the memoir at the end of the second volume of Arnold's Thucydides.

† See vol. i. chap. 2.

In consequence, hostilities were renewed, and the capture of the Spartans became an object of primary importance. The island was rocky and woody, and it was thought inexpedient to reduce them by force; a strict blockade was therefore drawn round the island to starve them into submission. But during the truce they probably had husbanded the provision allowed them; and a scanty supply was introduced by expert swimmers, who dragged after them skins filled with poppy-seed mixed with honey, or bruised linseed, or by boats which ran for the island on the seaward side in stormy nights, when it was difficult to maintain the blockade: and the Athenians began to be alarmed lest, in the difficulty and uncertainty of a winter blockade, they might lose their prey. The sequel may be best related from Thucydides, and in the following graphic passage of Plutarch, which supplies some curious notices of Cleon:—

"When the people saw that this siege drew out in length, and that their camp suffered grievous wants and necessities, then they fell out with Cleon, and he again burdened Nicias, saying, that through his fear he would let the besieged Spartans escape, and that if he had been captain they should not have held out so long. Thereupon the Athenians said aloud to Cleon, 'And why dost not thou go thither then to take them?' Moreover Nicias selfe also rising up, openly gave him his authority to take this Pylos, and bade him levy as many soldiers as he would to go thither, and not to bragg with such impudent words, where there was no danger, but to do some notable service to the commonwealth. Cleon at the first shrunk back, being amazed withal, little thinking they would have taken him so suddenly at his word: but in the end, perceiving the people urged him to it, and that Nicias also was importunate with him, ambition so inflamed him, that he not only took the charge upon him, but

in a bravery said, that within twenty days after his departure he would either put all the Spartans to the sword, or bring them prisoners to Athens. The Athenians hearing Cleon say so, had more lust to laugh than to believe that he spake; for it was their manner ever to laugh at his anger and folly. For it is reported of him, that the people on a time being solemnly assembled in council early in the morning, to hear what Cleon would say, and having tarried long for him, at the length he came with a garland on his head, and prayed the assembly to dismiss the court till the next morning: for (quoth he) I shall not be at leisure to-day, because I have sacrificed, and do feast also certain strangers, my friends, that are come to see me. So the people burst out in a laughing, and brake up the assembly.... But herein Nicias did great harm to the commonwealth, suffering Cleon in that sort to grow to credit and estimation. For after that victory Cleon grew to so haughty a mind and pride of himself, that he was not to be dealt withal; whereupon fell out the occasion of the great miseries that happened to the city of Athens, by which Nicias himself was not the smallest sufferer. For Cleon, among other things, took away the modesty and reverence used before in public orations to the people: he of all men was the first that cried out in his orations, that clapped his hand on his thigh, threw open his gowne, and flung up and down the pulpit as he spoke. Of which example afterwards followed all licentiousness and contempt of honesty, the which all the orators and counsellors fell into that dealt in matters of state and commonwealth, and was in the end the overthrow of all together *."

"Nicias, seeing the Athenians to be in a kind of

* North's Plutarch—Nicias. This reference of all the evils which befell Athens to the indecorous behaviour of one speaker is rather characteristic.

tumult against Cleon, for that when he thought it so easy a matter, he did not presently put it in practice, and seeing also he had upbraided him, willed him to take what strength he would, that they could give him, and undertake it. Cleon, supposing at first that he gave him this leave but in words, was ready to accept it; but when he knew he would give him the authority in good earnest, then he shrunk back, and said, that not he, but Nicias was general; being now indeed afraid, and hoping that he durst not have given over the office to him. But then Nicias again bade him do it, and gave over his command to him, for so much as concerned Pylos, and called the Athenians to witness it. They (as is the fashion of the multitude), the more Cleon declined the voyage, and went back from his word, pressed Nicias so much the more to resign his power to him, and cried out upon Cleon to go. Insomuch, as not knowing how to disengage himself of his word, he undertook the voyage, and stood forth, saying, that he feared not the Lacedæmonians, and that he would not carry any man with him out of the city, but only the Lemnians and Imbrians that were then present, and those targeteers that were come to them from Œnus, and 400 archers out of other places, and with these, he said, added to the soldiers that were at Pylos already, he would, within twenty days, either fetch away the Lacedæmonians alive, or kill them upon the place.

"This vain speech moved amongst the Athenians some laughter, and was heard with great content of the wiser sort. For of two benefits, the one must needs fall out; either to be rid of Cleon (which was their greatest hope), or if they were deceived in that, then to get those Lacedæmonians into their hands*."

Cleon sailed accordingly; but in the interim a fire had consumed the woods on the island, and Demos-

* Thucyd. iv. 28.

thenes, an able and successful general, was already preparing to attack the Lacedæmonians. Cleon was prudent enough to leave the direction of the assault in his hands. After an obstinate resistance, the Lacedæmonian force at last surrendered, being reduced in number to 292, of whom 120 were Spartans; and within the time prescribed Cleon returned in triumph to Athens with his prisoners. Thucydides says, that no event throughout the war created so much astonishment in Greece as this; it being the general opinion that the Lacedæmonians would not yield up their arms for famine, or for any other extremity, but rather die with them fighting as they best could.

Since this chapter was written, we have seen, in a work the scanty sale of which says little for the general diffusion of a taste for sound scholarship in England, an ingenious parallel between the remarkable transaction above narrated, and a passage in English history. The work in question, the 'Philological Museum,' is likely not to be in the hands of a large proportion of our readers; and instead of merely referring to it, we shall proceed to transcribe a portion of the article in question.

"Mr. Mitford, in his elaborate narrative of the Peloponnesian war, has drawn a comparison between the military operations of Brasidas in the Athenian dependencies lying towards Thrace, and those of General Wolfe, the hero of Quebec, in Canada. The points of resemblance are very remarkable; but, as he observes, the differences are also obvious. The parallel is, however, sufficiently close to awaken that interest which all men naturally feel in marking the identity of the human character, under similar circumstances, in ages and countries far removed from each other. Such indications of a common nature connect one generation with another, and bring home to the mind a more lively conception of the past.

The parallel about to be drawn fetches one of its subjects from the same period of Grecian history, so fertile in remarkable men and striking incidents. If, in Mr. Mitford's case, the points of difference be thought to outweigh those of resemblance, it may perhaps be said, that in the following comparison the preponderance is exactly reversed. It is needless to give a second account of what we have fully described, the transactions at Sphacteria, and the singular arrangement between Cleon and Nicias." After a short notice of these events, the author continues: "The people applaud Cleon's bold proposal, and insist on his going to redeem his word, whether he would or not. He goes, and is completely successful, bringing the captives to Athens within the specified twenty days. The applause of the citizens exceeded all moderation, with which party spirit had perhaps something to do. Cleon was esteemed a first-rate general, and accordingly sent out to match the incomparable Brasidas.

"The temper of the English public, at the period to which we are about to refer, is well evinced by the uncommon popularity of Glover's ballad, entitled Admiral Hosier's Ghost, which was a political squib. Hosier had been sent out to protect the West Indian trade against the Spaniards, who were a terror to our merchantmen in those seas. Their principal station was Porto Bello; off which accordingly Hosier cruised. But he had instructions not to make aggressions on the enemy; and he remained inactive at sea, insulted and despised by the Spaniards, till his crews became diseased, and he at last died of a broken heart. He was a brave sailor, but his orders kept him inactive. This state of things, so disgraceful to our naval power, continued till 1739; when Admiral Vernon, who was a fierce and not ineloquent assailant in debate, and the delight of his party

in the House of Commons from his blunt impudence and harassing hostility to Ministers, came prominently before the public. He was esteemed a pretty good officer; but his boisterous manner in the house was his principal recommendation. 'In a debate on the Spanish depredations, which still continued unrepressed, he chanced to affirm that Porto Bello might be easily taken, if the officers did their duty; and led on by the ardour of debate, he even pledged himself to capture the place, with only six ships of war, if they would put him in command. The opposition re-echoed his proposal. Vernon was called by anticipation a Drake, and a Raleigh; and his popularity knew no bounds. The minister, Sir R. Walpole, glad to appease the popular clamour, and to get rid for a time of Vernon's busy opposition in the Commons; and hoping perhaps, like Nicias, that by the failure of his boast he would disgrace himself and his party, or else clear the seas of the Spaniards, closed with the offer so lightly made; and actually sent him out with a fleet to the West Indies. Vernon sailed, and was as good as his word. He speedily took Porto Bello, and demolished all the fortifications. Both houses joined in an address; Vernon rose to the highest pitch of popularity; and 'the nation in general (observes the historian) was wonderfully elated by an exploit, which was magnified much above its merit.' A Sacheverel or a Vernon are quite sufficient pillars for a party to rear a triumphal arch upon.

"The extraordinary performance of an extravagant boast, under circumstances unexpectedly favourable, is not more observable in both cases, than the speedy exposure of the inability of both commanders, when subsequently put to the test. The hero of Sphacteria at the head of a brave army in Thrace, with which he did not know what to do* next, like a chess-player who

*Thucyd. v. 7.

does not see his next move, is absolutely ludicrous. The conduct of the conqueror of Porto Bello, when intrusted with a powerful fleet on a larger field of action, is equally decisive of his real merits. He failed most miserably as admiral on the West India station; thus showing that a *coup de main*, whether in politics or war, though it often succeed most signally, is no safe evidence of general ability*."

Fortified, as to our facts by the authority of history, we may proceed, after this digression, to develop the chief object of this chapter, which is to give a sketch of one of the most remarkable productions of Greek literature, the 'Knights' of Aristophanes, and to exhibit the Aristophanic Cleon, who, even after this preface, will surprise those who are unacquainted with him. We shall not be at a loss to find a parallel for him in our own history. To Cleon and his politics Aristophanes was violently opposed. Much undeserved obloquy has been thrown in times past upon this poet; it is now pretty generally acknowledged that the heaviest charges against him are undeserved; that he saw clearly what were the true interests of his country, and feared not to tell his turbulent countrymen their faults to their face. The medicine indeed required to be disguised to render it palatable, and we must regret that the vehicle employed was such as to render it disgusting to modern delicacy: but the fault of this lay partly in the state of society in which the poet lived; the courage, the clear-sightedness, and the brilliant talent are his own peculiar glory.

The Grecian comedy is a delicate and difficult subject to touch upon: for to those who are unacquainted with the original, abstracts and translations present little more than the lifeless form in its somewhat startling extravagance. Of the wit, the greatest part

* Philological Museum, vol. ii. p. 706.

must evaporate, and the remainder requires, in order to be relished, some familiarity with the manners to which it refers. The Grecian drama had its origin in religion. In the worship of Dionysius, or Bacchus, one of the earliest of the Grecian deities, it was usual to introduce two sorts of poetry; the one lofty and panegyrical, the other ludicrous and satirical. As these rude attempts acquired extent and polish, they separated in character more and more widely: until the former acquired the exalted and highly reverential cast which we see in the tragedies of Æschylus; while the latter retained its original features, more pleasing to a deity who is mythologically represented as inspiring and partaking the most fantastic rites of his followers, and as being offended by nothing except sobriety or gravity. Extravagance and indecency therefore became a religious duty, and one that the Athenians fulfilled with pious fervour. The drama was a matter of public interest; plays were performed, not daily, but upon the festivals of Bacchus, in the early spring *, in theatres of vast extent, with all the magnificence and effect which anxious care and unsparing expense could produce; judges were appointed by the public to decide upon the merits of the pieces represented, and the prize of victory was sought with an eagerness totally disproportioned, according to modern notions, to the object in view.

In co-operation with the author, certain persons, called Choragi, were appointed by law, at whose expense the Chorus was provided, and carefully instructed in the parts which they were to perform. Upon the taste and liberality of the Choragus the success of the author mainly depended, and if successful, he consecrated to Bacchus a tripod inscribed with his own name, that of the author, and of the magistrate who gave his name to the year. The

* Mus. Crit. vol. ii. p. 75, *seq.*

modern drama possesses nothing which resembles the Chorus. We have already noticed the religious songs from which theatrical entertainments were derived. The first step to their improvement was the introduction of some mythological narration by another person to relieve the singer; the second, the conversion of this narrative into dialogue, by the introduction of a second actor. For some time the original Bacchic song maintained its ground in the intervals of recitation; but at length the lyrical part was made to bear upon the rest of the performance, and as a taste for splendour was developed, the number of singers was increased from one to three, fifteen, or even a greater number[*]. In the advanced state of the art the Chorus bore marks of its original constitution, being still regarded as a single actor, and mingling in the dialogue by means of its Coryphæus, or leader. In tragedy it was composed of old men, maidens, or any class of persons who were interested in the catastrophe of the piece: the comic poets took a wider range, and availed themselves of the boldest personifications which they thought likely to produce effect. Thus in one play of Aristophanes there is a Chorus of Clouds, in another of Birds, in another of Frogs, in another of Wasps, which were all so habited as to bear some vague resemblance to the things they personated, in a manner which such as recollect a pantomime of no very old date, called Harlequin and the Queen Bee, will be at no loss to comprehend. The introductory scenes of our pantommes often seem to imitate these freaks of Grecian comedy; as for instance, in Harlequin Gulliver, where the inhabitants of the dog-star, as described by another eminent traveller, Baron Munchausen, came in to sing; also a chorus of men with their heads under their shoulders. And indeed the later scenes of panto-

[*] Mus. Crit. vol. ii. p. 207.

mime, by retrenching the practical jokes, and by the introduction of dialogue, might be made to bear considerable resemblance to Grecian comedy. Grimaldi's parody of the dagger-scene in Macbeth, although principally aimed at a particular actor, was a capital parallel to the pitiless pelting of wit carried on by the comedians of Athens against the tragedians, and against each other.

No history of the gradual formation of comedy has come down to us, but in the time of Aristophanes we find her possessed of most extraordinary privileges, and availing herself of them to the extremity of licence. To laugh was the grand object of the audience, and any thing was tolerated which led to this conclusion. The slang of the port and the market, the pleadings of the law courts, the peculiar language of handicrafts, were all carefully studied and profusely introduced, in combination with the grossest buffoonery and indecency, and the most unsparing personal abuse. In a town like Athens, the population of which, though large, was crowded within a narrow space and almost living in the open air, a joke directed against the peculiarities, corporeal or moral, of any person of any sort of notoriety, was pretty sure to be understood, and if understood, quite sure to be relished. Masks were always worn by the actors, and if a living character was brought on the stage the mask was a portrait. Unlucky poets, public defaulters, peculators, and notorious profligates, formed the stock in trade common to all comedians; and a more exceptionable source of amusement was found in the unrestrained indulgence of private malevolence. Even the sacred persons of the gods were fair game; and Bacchus, the patron of the festival, was made to minister to the amusement of his riotous worshipers as the earliest Captain Bobadil upon record*. Such are the fea-

* See the Frogs.

tures of the elder Grecian comedy, confirmed by, and indeed mainly derived from the works of Aristophanes, the only comedian of whom a perfect specimen remains*.

After this exposition the reader may be surprised at the respectful terms in which we have above spoken of him. But it is pretty certain that he saw clearly the true interests of his country; and there is good ground for thinking that four at least of the eleven plays now extant were written with the express view of improving its policy, or, strange as it may appear, of correcting its morals; while through them all the national faults of the Athenians are lashed with an unsparing and somewhat dangerous severity. To argue this question would transport us far from our subject, from which indeed we have already wandered wide, and far beyond our limits: and is the less necessary because it has already been fully argued in works of easy access (Mitchell, Prelim. Discourse; Schlegel, Lectures on History of Literature; Observer). On the literary merits of Aristophanes all are agreed. For power and variety of versification, he stands unrivalled; for command of the noble language in which

* Comedy is divided by the Grecian critics into three branches; the old, the middle, and the new. Of the two latter, we know little, since the works of Aristophanes, the only perfect comedies extant, belong, with one exception, to the first. It would be foreign to our purpose to enter here into a description of them; but it may be generally stated that they were of a milder character; the licence of personality was gradually retrenched, and with it, the political importance of the stage. The lines of distinction cannot be drawn with much precision, but the former of them seems to commence early in the fourth century, B. C., the latter in the reign of Alexander, which began B. C. 336. The total loss of the new comedy, and especially of Menander is perhaps the greatest that classic literature has sustained. It appears from the remaining fragments to have been of a highly polished and moral cast. But a good idea of its general form and tendency may be derived from Plautus and Terence, of whose plays several are little more than translations from it.

he wrote, he is perhaps unmatched, except by Plato. His wit it would be superfluous to praise; unfortunately it is too often exercised on subjects which endure not an English dress. Nothing perhaps approaches so nearly to the usual style of his dialogue as the less refined parts of Shakspeare's comedies, but the latter want that political design which, pervading the Grecian, inclines us to forget the means in the end, and are in other respects scarcely equal to the comparison. But amidst all this ribaldry he often breaks out in a vein of pure and exalted poetry, sufficient to show that he was capable of excelling in the most elegant or dignified departments of the art, had the temper of his countrymen been such as to profit by or allow a hearing to serious admonition.

One of his most celebrated comedies, 'the Knights,' is directed expressly to destroy the popularity of Cleon. The danger incurred by the author is evident from an anecdote related by himself, that no mask-maker could be induced to furnish a likeness of the demagogue[1]. And as no actor would perform the part, the poet himself made his first appearance on the stage in it, his face rubbed with vermilion, or the lees of wine, to imitate Cleon's complexion, and serve in some degree for a disguise. The plot, if we may call it such, is mainly founded on the transactions at Pylos, already related, and the characters are selected accordingly.

Nicias, Demosthenes, and Cleon figure as slaves of Demus, literally "the people," who represents the Athenian as John Bull does the English nation. The only other character is an itinerant sausage-seller. The chorus is composed of knights or horsemen, the richer class of citizens, who were obliged to keep a horse and be prepared for the cavalry service. De-

[1] Knights line 231 ed. Bekk., see the Scholia. It was usual for authors to perform a part in their own comedies. Aristophanes had not hitherto complied with this custom.

mosthenes and Nicias appear in the first scene, and complain bitterly of a certain Paphlagonian; such is the country which the poet has assigned to Cleon, whom their master has lately brought home, partly, according to the Scholiast (Knights, verse 2), for the sake of an untranslatable pun, partly because the Paphlagonians had the reputation of making the worst-conditioned slaves of all who came to the Athenian market. After some quibbling they agree to submit their case to the spectators, and Demosthenes states it as follows *:—

With reverence to your worships, 'tis our fate
To have a testy, cross-grained, bilious, sour
Old fellow for our master; one much given
To a bean diet†; somewhat hard of hearing?
Demus his name, sirs, of the parish Pnyx‡ here.
Some three weeks back or so, this lord of ours
Brought back a scoundrel slave from Paphlagonia,
Fresh from the tan-yard, with as foul a mouth
As ever yet paid tribute to the gallows.
This tanner§ Paphlagonian (for the fellow
Wanted not penetration,) bowed and scraped,

* The following extracts are from Mr. Mitchell's translation; to whom apology is due for occasional omissions, where the allusion would have required a large body of notes to render them generally intelligible, without being necessary to the general effect of the passage, and a few slight alterations.

† The Athenian judges used beans in giving their votes. Each received three obols, about five-pence, for his fee, and in one of the courts the common number of judges was from two to five hundred or more. The poorer classes made a livelihood in this way, and hence there sprung an extraordinary love of litigation, which Aristophanes is continually satirizing. The 'Wasps' is expressly directed against it.

‡ Pnyx, the place of general assembly. It was filled with stone seats, to which reference will be made hereafter.

§ Cleon's father was a tanner, and the poet is continually twitting him with his dirty trade.

And fawned, and wagged his ears and tail dog fashion,
And thus soon slipped into the old man's graces.
Occasional douceurs of leather parings,
With speeches to this tune, made all his own:
" Good sir, the court is up—you've judged one cause,
'Tis time to take the bath; allow me, sir—
This cake is excellent—pray sup this broth—
You love an obolus, pray take these three—
Honour me, sir, with your commands for supper."
Sad times meanwhile for us!—With prying looks
Round comes my man of hides, and if he finds us
Cooking a little something for our master,
Incontinently lays his paw upon it,
And modestly, in his own name, presents it.
It was but t'other day, these hands had mixed
A Spartan pudding for him,—there, at Pylos,
Slily and craftily the knave stole on me,
Ravished the feast, and to my master bore it.
Then none but he, forsooth, must wait at table:
(We dare not come in sight) anon the knave
Chaunts out his oracles, and when he sees
The old man plunged in mysteries to the ears,
And scared from his few senses, marks the time,
And enters on his tricks. False accusations
Now come in troops, and at their heels the whip.
Meanwhile the rascal shuffles in among us,
And begs of one, browbeats another, cheats
A third, and frightens all. " My honest friends,
These cords cut deep, you'll find it—I say nothing—
Judge you between your purses and your backs;
I could perhaps—" We take the gentle hint,
And give him all; if not, the old man's foot
Plays such a tune upon our hinder parts,—
Wherefore (to Nicias) befits it that we think what course
To take, or where to look for help.

Mitchell, p. 161–4.

The remedy however baffles their ingenuity, till Demosthenes, through the inspiration of the wine-flask, sends his comrade to steal from Cleon, who is asleep within, a certain book of oracles which he hoards with especial care. They are happily secured and handed over to Demosthenes, whose activity is all along contrasted with the indecision of Nicias. After repeated application for more wine to clear his understanding, he at last condescends to enlighten his companion's impatience.

Dem. (*reading.*) So, so, thou varlet of a Paphlagonian!
'Twas this bred such distrust in thee, and taught
To hoard these prophecies.
Nic. Say you?
Dem. I say
Here is a prophecy, which tells the time
And manner of this fellow's death.
Nic. Out with it.
Dem. (*reading.*) The words are clear enough, first says my oracle,
There shall arise within our state a lint-seller*,
And to his hands the state shall be committed.
Nic. One seller note we:—good, proceed, what follows?
Dem. (*reading.*) Him shall a sheep-seller succeed†.
Nic. A brace
Of sellers, good.—What shall befall this worthy?
Dem. (*reading.*) 'Tis fixed that he bear sway till one arise
More wicked than himself—that moment seals him.
Then comes the Paphlagonian—the hide seller—
The man of claws, whose voice outroars Cycloborus‡.
Nic. The man of sheep then falls beneath the lord
Of hides!

* Eucrates. † Lysicles
‡ A mountain torrent of Attica.

Dem. Even so; thus runs the oracle.
Nic. Another and another still succeeds,
And all are sellers! sure the race must be
Extinct!
Dem. One yet is left whose craft may stir
Your wonder.
Nic. What his name?
Dem. Wou'dst learn?
Nic. Aye marry.
Dem. I give it to thee then: the man that ruins
The Paphlagonian is—a sausage-seller.

Mitchell, p. 170-2.

A person exercising this lofty vocation is now seen approaching and is eagerly hailed, as sent at this moment by the especial favour of the gods. Their fated deliverer, however, is a modest man, and cannot easily be led to believe the high destiny that awaits him. I am a sausage-seller, he says; how should I become a man? Demosthenes assures him that the qualities belonging to his profession—impudence and cheating—are precisely those to which his greatness is to be owing: but still failing to overcome his scruples, he is led to suspect the sausage-seller of the unpardonable fault of having some taint of gentility in his extraction. Satisfied on this point, he proceeds to expound the oracles. The incipient statesman yields to their predictions, and readily receives instructions for his public life. "The oracles indeed do flatter me; but I wonder how I shall be able to take charge of the people." The answer is addressed to his professional experience.

Dem. Nought easier: model you upon your trade.
Deal with the people as with sausages—
Twist, implicate, embroil; nothing will hurt
So you but make your court to Demus, cheating
And soothing him with terms of kitchen science;

All other public talents are your own:
Your voice is strong, your liver white, and you are
O' the market—say, could Diffidence ask more
To claim the reins of state?

Mitchell, p. 180.

Cleon now comes on the stage, with the usual cry, "The commonwealth is in danger," and is immediately followed by the Chorus, who attack him in an indignant burst, which defies translation. A long scene of abuse and recrimination follows for near three hundred lines, in the course of which every art and trade is made to contribute to the contest of abuse, till Cleon at length accuses his rival of having received ten talents as a bribe. "What then," he replies, "will you take one of them to hold your tongue?" "That he will, and gladly," replies the Chorus; "see, the wind is going down already." The satire was the keener, because Cleon had recently been fined five talents on a conviction for bribery*. At length, being somewhat worsted, he leaves the stage, with the threat of denouncing to the council "the nightly meetings in the city, and conspiracies with the Medes and Bœotians," in which his tormentors are engaged. The sausage-seller follows to countermine him, and the stage is left clear for the Parabasis, or customary address of the Chorus to the audience. This was generally unconnected with the play, and served as an opportunity for the author to deliver his sentiments upon all things and all people. It was chiefly satirical, but in Aristophanes is usually

* It has been generally said that Cleon lost his popularity, and incurred this fine in consequence of the representation of the Knights; but there is no authority for the former supposition, and the latter is disproved by the mention of this fine in the opening of the Acharnians, acted the year before, in the sixth year of the Peloponnesian war. The prosecution was conducted by the Knights; which probably led to the mistake.

intermixed with passages of a highly poetical cast, which strike the more from being introduced by a change in the metre We cannot shorten or garble it, and the passage is too long, and would be too unintelligible, to be given entire* At the close of it, the sausage seller returns to acquaint his anxious friends with his success

Sirs Straight as he went from hence, I clapt all sail
And followed close behind Within I found him
Launching his bolts, and thunder driving words,
Denouncing all the knights as traitors, vile
Conspirators—rags curls and trusses huge
Of stone were nothing to the monstrous words
His foaming mouth heaved up All this to hear
Did the grave council seriously incline
They love a tale of scandal in their hearts
And his had been as quick in birth as golden herb
Mistaul was in their faces and their brows
With frowns were furrowed up I saw the storm,
Marked how his words had sunk upon them, taking
Their very senses prisoners —and oh!
In knavery sure me thought I,—by all the fools,
And scurils, and rogues, and scoundrels in the town—
By that same market, where my early youth
Received its first instruction, let me gather
True courage now be call upon my tongue,
And shameless impudence direct my speech
Just as these thoughts passed over me, I heard
A sound of thunder pealing on my right!
I marked the omen—grateful kissed the ground,
And pushing briskly through the lattice work,
Raised my voice to its highest pitch, and thus

* In the original it occupies altogether more than 100 lines in a play of 1400

† Thunder from the right hand was an omen of good fortune. See the original ver 659

Began upon them: "Messieurs of the Senate,
I bring good news, and hope your favour for it.
Anchovies, such as since this war began,
Ne'er crossed my eyes for cheapness, do this day
Adorn our markets."—At the words, a calm
Came over every face, and all was hushed.
A crown* was voted me upon the spot.
Then I (the thought was of the moment's birth)
Making a mighty secret of it, bade them
Put pans and pots in instant requisition,
And then—one obol loads you with anchovies.
Then rose the clap of hands, and every face
Gaped into mine, in idiot vacancy.
My Paphlagonian, seeing by what words
The council best were pleased, thus uttered him:
"Sirs, Gentlemen, 'tis my good will and pleasure
That for this kindly news, we sacrifice†
One hundred oxen to our patron goddess."
Straight the tide turned, each head within the senate
Nodded assent, and warm good will to Cleon.
What! shall a little bull-flesh gain the day,
Thought I within me: then aloud, and shooting
Beyond his mark: I double, sirs, this vote;
Nay, more, sirs, should to-morrow's sun see sprats
One hundred to the penny sold, I move
That we make offering of a thousand goats ‡
Unto Diana. Every head was raised,
And all turned eyes on me. This was a blow

* A crown or chaplet was the usual reward of such persons as brought good news.

† A sacrifice and a public feast were synonymous, for only a small portion of the victims were offered to the gods.

‡ "The sausage-seller in Aristophanes promises to offer a thousand goats to Artemis Agrotera (outbidding in jest the offering of thanks for the battle of Marathon), whenever a hundred trichides, a small kind of fish, were sold for an obolus, which was therefore an impossibility." Boeckh, Public Economy of Athens.

He ne'er recovered: straight he fell to words
Of idle import, and the officers
Were now upon him. All meantime was uproar
In th' assembly—nought talked of but anchovies—
How fared our statesman? he with suppliant tones
Begged a few moments' pause: Rest ye, sirs, rest ye
Awhile—I have a tale will pay the hearing—
A herald brings from Sparta terms of peace,
And craves to utter them before you. "Peace!"
Cried all (their voices one), "is this a time
To talk of peace?—out dotard! What, the rogues
Have heard the price anchovies sell for! peace!
Who cares for peace now? let the war go on;
And, chairman, break the assembly up." 'Twas done—
On every side, one moment clears the rails!
I the mean time steal privately away
And buy me all the leeks and coriander
In the market: these I straight make largess of,
And gratis give, as sauce to dress their fish.
Who may recount the praises infinite,
And groom-like courtesies this bounty gained me!
In short, you see a man, that for one pennyworth
Of coriander vile, has purchased him
An entire senate: not a man among them
But is at my behest, and does me reverence.

Mitchell, p. 217, 221.

So soon as the Chorus has expressed its high satisfaction, Cleon enters, and the war of words is renewed with equal spirit, till he calls upon Demus to appear, and see what ill treatment he suffers on his account. Demus hears the candidates for his favour, and resolves to call an assembly to decide on their claims; but he insists that it shall be held in his proper seat, the Pnyx, to the dismay of the sausage-seller, who exclaims that he is ruined; since Demus, though a clever fellow any where else, is a gaping

ninny when he gets on one of those stone benches *. However, there is no help for it; the scene changes to the Pnyx, and the sausage-seller makes a favourable impression by presenting to Demus a cushion to keep him from the bare stone, with a most pathetic reference to his exploits at Salamis†; a subject in reference to which the Athenians would swallow any amount of flattery. Having gained the ear of the court, he exposes the mischievous tendency of Cleon's warlike politics, all the gain of which was his own, while the evil and inconvenience were the portion of Demus. This produces an effect which all the protestations of Cleon cannot remove. "You that profess such devotion," continues his enemy, "did you ever, out of all the hides you sell, give him so much as a pair of shoes?" "Not he indeed," replies Demus. A pair is immediately presented, and the provident donor receives the grateful assurance, that of all men living he is the best friend to the people, the city, "and to my toes." This specimen will probably be sufficient: the result is altogether favourable to the sausage-seller, who is put in possession of Cleon's signet of office. The latter still has a resource: he appeals to his favourite oracles; but even here he meets with his match. They both quit the stage, and return laden.

Demus. What may you bear?
Cleon. Predictions, oracles.
Demus. What, all!
Cleon. Now you
Admire, and yet a chest filled to the brim
Is left behind.

* The seats in the Pnyx.

† κἄτα καθίζου μαλακῶς, ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι, v. 783. That the respected member on which the chief stress of the battle of Salamis had fallen, might be exempt in future from all common friction.

Saus. I have a garret stored
With them, and eke two dwelling-chambers whole.
Demus. And who has worded these?
Cleon. Mine come from Bacis*.
Demus (*to Saus.*) And yours?
Saus. From Glanis, sir, his elder brother.
Demus. Now mould them for my ears.
Cleon. It shall be done, sir.

* * * * * *

(*Reads.*) In Athens the sacred, a cry's heard for help,
A woman's in labour— a lion her whelp.
For warfare he's born, and will fight by the great,
With the ants, and the gnats, and the vermin of state.
On gratitude rests it this wall to environ
With a wall of stout wood, and a turret of iron.
Demus. Dost reach him? (*to Saus.*)
Saus. Sir, not I.
Cleon. And yet the god
Speaks clear. I am the lion, and I claim
Protection.
Demus. Good; his words sure stand with reason,
Who else may plead a lion's teeth and claws! †
Saus. Aye, but he sinks the iron wall and wood,
Where Phœbus wills that you hold guard of him;
And thus he falsifies the exposition.
Demus. And how do you expound it?
Saus. By the wood
And iron wall, I understand the pillory:
The oracle enjoins he takes his place there.
Demus. And I subscribe me to its pleasure.

* Bacis was an ancient Bœotian seer of high reputation, who prophesied the Persian invasion among other things: see Herod. viii. 77. The name and existence of Glanis, like the oracles to be produced, is a ready fiction of the sausage-seller.

† We are not answerable for the fidelity of Mr. Mitchell's translation of this, or of some other lines. The corresponding line in the original is indeed hardly susceptible of translation.

Cleon. Nay,
Not so, the envious crows are croaking round me.
* * * * * *
But another prediction awaits my lord's ear,
'Tis Phœbus that warns—"of Cyllene beware."

Demus. Cyllene*, Cyllene, how this understand? (*to Saus.*)

Saus. Cyllene is lameness, and means a lame hand,
To Cleon's apply it: as with bruise or with maim
Still 'tis bent with—your honour, drop gift in the same.
* * * * * *

Cleon. I have seen me a vision; I've dreamed me a dream;
Its author was Pallas, and Demus its theme:
The cup aryteenat blazed broad in her hand,
And plenty and riches fell wide o'er the land.

Saus. I too have my visions and dreams of the night:
Our lady‡ and owl stood confest to my sight;
From the cup aryballus choice blessings she threw.
(*To Cleon.*) On him fell tan pickle, and nectar on you.
(*to Demus.*)

Here ends the contest of oracles; and Demus, after expressing his opinion that there never was a wiser man than Glanis, commits himself to the guidance and instruction of the sausage-seller. He is induced to pause, however, by the offers which Cleon makes, of supplying his table with provisions, and finally comes to the resolution of "giving the reins of the Pnyx" to which soever of the two candidates shall offer the most acceptable bribes. They quit the stage, each endeavouring to get the advantage in

* A city of Arcadia. A word of similar sound means "lame."

† The Grecians indulged their luxury in the article of drinking-vessels in an extravagant degree, and every sort of cup had its peculiar appellation. There is no allusion contained in the names introduced here.

‡ Pallas, the tutelary deity of Athens.

a false start; and the Chorus comes forward with an address to Demus.

Chorus. Honour, power, and high estate,
Demus, mighty lord, hast thou:
To thy sceptre small and great
In obeisance lowly bow!
Yet you're easy to his hand, whoever cringes:
Every fool you gape upon,
Every speech your ear hath won,
While your wits move off and on
Their hinges.

Demus (*surlily*). Hinges in their teeth, who deem
That Demus is an easy fool;
If he yawn, and if he dream,
If he tipple, 'tis by rule.
'Tis his way to keep in pay a knave to ease him;
Him he keeps for guide and gull,
But when once the sponge is full,
To himself the knave he'll pull,
And squeeze him[1].

Mitchell, p. 250, 262.

They return laden with all sorts of eatables. "The sausage-seller has the advantage of his rival "for some time in his presents, till Cleon awakens his "fears by talking of a dish of hare, which he has ex- "clusively to present. His rival, disconcerted at first,

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Hamlet. Aye, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities ... such officers do the king best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed. When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing, and then, sponge, you shall be dry again.—*Hamlet*,

Mr. Mitchell's translation is plainly modelled on this passage; and is more like that than the original. Vespasian is said to have promoted the most rapacious collectors to the highest offices, "whom he was commonly said to use as *sponges*, that he might squeeze them out when they had sucked up enough. Sueton. c. 16.

" has recourse to a stratagem. ' Some ambassadors " come this way, *and their purses seem well filled.*' " ' Where are they,' exclaims Cleon eagerly, and turns " about. The hare-flesh was immediately in the hands " of his rival, who presents the boasted dainty in his " own name to Demus, and casts the old affair of " Pylos in the disappointed Cleon's teeth*.

" While the sausage-seller piously refers the sug- " gestion of this little theft to Minerva, and modestly " takes the execution only to himself, Cleon resents " the surprise very warmly. ' I had all the danger of " catching the hare,' says he. ' I had all the trouble " of dressing it,' says his rival. ' Fools,' says Demus, " ' I care not who caught it, nor who dressed it; all I " regard is the hand which serves it up to table. The " sausage-seller proposes a new test of affection.' ' Let " our chests be searched; it will then be proved who " is the better man towards Demus and his stomach.' " This is accordingly done. That of the new candidate " for power is found empty. ' He had given his dear ' little grandfather every thing;' and the person so " benefited signifies his approbation. ' This chest is " well disposed towards Demus.' In Cleon's is found " abundance of all good things; and a tempting " cheese-cake particularly excites Demus's surprise. " ' The rogue,' says this representative of the sove- " reign multitude, ' to conceal such a prodigious " cheese-cake as this, and to cut me off with a mere " morsel of it.' Cleon in vain pleads, that he stole " it for the good of his country. He is ordered to " lay down his chaplet †, and invest his antagonist " with it. Nay, says he, still struggling for the re- " tention of office,"

Cleon. I have an oracle; it came from Phœbus,
And tells to whom Fate wills I yield the mastery.

* Where he had served Demosthenes the same trick, see p. 232,3.
† Cleon had received a chaplet in full assembly from the people.

Saus. Declare the name; my life upon't, the god
Refers to me.

Cleon. Presumptuous! you! low scoundrel
To the proof;—where were you schooled, and who the teacher
That first imbued your infant mind with knowledge?

Saus. The kitchen and the scullery gave me breeding;
And teachers I had none, save blows and cuffs.

Cleon. My mind misgives me.
But pass we on; say further, what the wrestling-master
Instructed you?

Saus. To steal, to look the injured
Full in the face, and then forswear the theft.

* * * * * *

Cleon. One only hope remains. Resolve me, practised you
Within the market-place, or at the gates[1]?

Saus. Nay, at the gates, among the men who deal
In salted fish.

Cleon. All is accomplished· •
It is the will of heaven bear me within.
Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!
Adieu, fair chaplet! 'gainst my will I quit thee,
And give thy matchless sweets to other hands!
There may be knaves more fortunate than I,
But never shall the world see thief more rascally.

Saus. (*devoutly*) Thine be the triumph, Jove Ellanian‡! P. 269-73.

The Chorus now enters upon an address, first in praise of the equestrian order, and then proceeding to satirize individuals by name. Meanwhile Demus is

[1] The lowest tradesmen only took their stand at the gates of the town: every answer is made to show the utter baseness of Cleon's rival: and thus to place himself in the most ignominious light.

† Parodied from Euripides' description of the dying Alcestis taking leave of her bridal bed, v. 181.

‡ Jupiter, the protector of Greece.

undergoing a thorough purgation under the hands of the sausage-seller. He reappears "in his former splendour of the days of Miltiades and Aristides," delivers a recantation of his former principles, and concludes the piece by confirming the appointment of the sausage-seller to Cleon's place, and investing Cleon solemnly with the tray, and other implements of the sausage-seller.

To those who are disappointed in the specimen here given of the wit and humour of Aristophanes, we have only to suggest in defence of our author, that a large proportion of the most remarkable passages have been omitted, on account of the impossibility of rendering them intelligible, even by a prolix commentary, to those who cannot read the original; and that our description of the 'Knights,' is but a set of fragments from a translation, which professes its inability to render its original as a whole. And we may quote, as much more applicable to this short attempt than to the work to which it is prefixed, the singularly happy and modest motto of Mr. Mitchell's translation, applicable as it must be to all translations, but especially to those of Aristophanes.

> Among the rest, he culled me out a root;
> The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it;
> And in another country, as he said,
> Bore a bright golden flower, *but not in this soil.*
>
> *Comus.*

In the Parabasis to the Clouds, performed two years after the Knights, the poet refers with pride to his attack on Cleon at his highest; but though he returns to the charge once and again, he makes no mention of any fine imposed upon him; which is in itself almost a sufficient refutation of the story mentioned in a previous note. The play was so relished as to gain the first prize, but there is not a jot of

evidence to show that Cleon's popularity was overclouded by it. Happily his reign only lasted for two years after it. His success at Pylus flattered him into a belief in his talents for war, and he took the command of the army in Thrace, opposed to Brasidas, the best Spartan general of his day. His incapacity lost the Athenians a battle, but the generals on both sides were slain; and the death of their greatest nuisance at home, and their worst enemy abroad, was an ample recompense for the injury incurred by his rashness. "When both Cleon and Brasidas were slain, the which on either side were most opposite to the peace: the one for that he had good success and honour in the war; the other, because in quiet times his evil actions would the more appear, and his calumniations be the less believed*," peace, though of brief duration, was almost immediately concluded.

That Cleon should have succeeded to the influence of Pericles may well surprise the reader. But a very slight inequality will turn the course of a rapid current to the undermining of its own banks; and in like manner, when men's minds are deeply moved, things in quiet times contemptible may acquire influence and importance commensurate with the force of that which they are enabled, by no intrinsic qualities, to control. By no other considerations can we explain—to justify it is impossible—the extravagance of terror and fury into which England was once goaded by a man, who for knavery and impudence may match the Athenian demagogue, and who, for some time, bore equal sway over the minds of his countrymen, Titus Oates, the discoverer, and probably the inventor of the Popish Plot. Some excuse is to be found in the political circumstances of the times; in the belief that the King adhered secretly to the Romish faith, as the Duke of York

* Thucyd. v. 16.

openly professed it; and especially in the known fact that the sovereign of Britain was pensioned by France, that he might dispense with parliaments, and the more easily establish himself on an absolute throne. The high character of many who promoted the inquiry, is a sufficient warrant that they were actuated by no unworthy motives. But the revolting narrative of murders committed under form of law by perjured witnesses and corrupt judges, will remain for ever a blot in our history; a warning against adding gall to bitterness; against aggravating political dissension by religious discord.

The first information of the plot was given by one Dr. Tongue, in August 1678; but the King, who was by no means deficient in penetration, pronounced it to be a forgery, and it might have slept for ever, had not the Duke of York, whose confessor was implicated, judged an inquiry necessary to clear himself from all suspicion. Tongue professed to have his information from Oates, and having brought the principal actor on the stage, took no further part in the action of the piece. On Michaelmas-eve Oates was examined before the council, and deposed to the existence of a most extensive conspiracy among the Jesuits, to murder the King. He indicated Coleman, formerly secretary to the Duke of York, and at that time to the Duchess, as being acquainted with all the schemes under consideration. The effect of this announcement is thus described by a most amiable and unprejudiced contemporary.

"October 1, 1678. The parliament and the whole nation were alarmed about a conspiracy of some eminent Papists, for the destruction of the King, and introduction of Popery, discovered by one Oates and Dr. Tongue, which last I knew. I went to see and converse with him at Whitehall, with Mr. Oates, one that was lately an apostate to the church of

Rome, and now returned again with this discovery. He seemed to be a bold man, and, in my thoughts, furiously indiscreet; but every body believed what he said, and it quite changed the genius and motions of the parliament, growing now corrupt, and interested with long sitting and court practices; but with all this, Popery would not go down. This discovery turned them all as one man against it, and nothing was done but to find out the depth of this. Oates was encouraged, and every thing he affirmed taken for gospel. The truth is, the Roman Catholics were exceedingly bold and busy everywhere, since the Duke forbore to go any longer to the chapel *."

Coleman had notice of his danger, and secreted a part, but not the whole, of his papers. The remainder were seized, and clearly proved that he had maintained a correspondence with the confessor of Louis XIV., the object of which was the reconversion of England. Besides appearing before the council, Oates made oath to the truth of his Narrative, which he published, before Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, a zealous Protestant, and active justice of peace, and yet one that lived on good terms both with Non-conformists and Papists. Very shortly afterwards Godfrey was murdered. He was found in a ditch, with his own sword sticking in his body, which had not been plundered; and marks of strangling were thought to be visible about his neck, and some contusions on his breast. It has ever been a mystery by whom this crime was perpetrated; it was of course charged on the Papists, and retorted by them on the contrivers and assertors of the plot. But the support given to Oates's story by this event, conjointly with Coleman's papers, threw the whole country into a ferment. Vast crowds flocked to behold the corpse; the funeral excited equal interest, and the wish of its conductors

* Evelyn's Memoirs.

to inflame the people is visible in some extraordinary precautions said to have been taken against a danger which no man could have apprehended seriously. The following account is taken from a contemporary of high tory principles, and animated by a most especial hatred of Oates.



This medal appears to have been struck in ridicule of the notion that Godfrey murdered himself. He is represented as walking with the halter about his neck, apparently towards Primrose Hill, seen in the distance with its familiar bush. The legend, "Impossibile," refers to the well-known story of St Denys, who could believe the Popish account that Godfrey had killed himself.

"The next and last act of this tragedy was the funeral of this poor gentleman, and if it had been possible the rout could have been more formidable than at the exposition of him it must now have appeared. For as about other party concerns, so here the time and place of the assemblation was generally notified, as also what learned divine was to preach the sermon. The crowd was prodigious, both at the procession and in and about the church, and so heated, that

any thing called Papist had gone to pieces in an instant. The Catholics all kept close in their houses and lodgings, thinking it a good composition to be safe there; so far were they from acting violently at that time. But there was all this time upheld among the common people an artificial fright, so as almost every one fancied a Popish knife just at his throat. And at the sermon, besides the preacher, two other thumping divines stood upright in the pulpit, one on each side of him, to guard him from being killed while he was preaching, by the Papists. I did not see this spectacle, but was credibly told by some that affirmed they did see it; and though I have often mentioned it, as now, with precaution, yet I never met with any that contradicted it. A most portentous spectacle sure! Three parsons in one pulpit! Enough of itself, on a less occasion, to strike a terror into the audience *."

This might perhaps be considered as party spleen; but the testimony of Calamy, one of the most learned and amiable dissenting clergymen of his day, and a believer in much, though not in all the details of the plot, to the extravagancies committed, is unexceptionable.

"Though I was at that time but young (he was about nine years of age), yet can I not forget how much I was affected with seeing several that were condemned for this plot, go to be executed at Tyburn, and at the pageantry of the mock processions on the 17th of November†. Roger L'Estrange (who used to be called Oliver's Fiddler), formerly in danger of being hanged for a spy, and about this time the admired buffoon of high-church, called them 'hobby-horsing processions.'

* Roger North, Examen, p. 204.

† Queen Elizabeth's birth-day. These processions were in 1679 and 1680.

"In one of them, in the midst of vast crowds of spectators, who made great acclamations and showed abundance of satisfaction, there were carried in pageants upon men's shoulders through the chief streets of the city, the effigies of the Pope, with the representation of the devil behind him, whispering in his ear, and wonderfully soothing and caressing him (though he afterwards deserted him, and left him to shift for himself, before he was committed to the flames), together with the likeness of the dead body of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, carried before him by one that rode on horseback, designed to remind the people of his execrable murder. And a great number of dignitaries in their copes, with crosses; monks, friars, and Jesuits; Popish bishops in their mitres, with all their trinkets and appurtenances. Such things as these very discernibly heightened and inflamed the general aversion of the nation from Popery: but it is to be feared, on the other hand, they put some people, by way of revulsion, upon such desperate expedients as brought us even within an ace of ruin*."

A few days after these events the parliament met. "All Oates's evidence was now so well believed, that it was not safe for any man to seem to doubt of any part of it. He thought he had the nation in his hands, and was swelled up to the highest pitch of vanity and insolence. And now he made a new edition of his discovery before the bar of the House of Commons†." He now said that the Pope, having declared himself entitled to the possession of England, in virtue of the heresy of prince and people, had delegated the supreme power to the order of Jesuits, and that in consequence commissions had been

* Life of Edmund Calamy, vol. i. p. 84.

† Burnet, Hist. of his own Times, p. 430. Oates had before only deposed to a plot among the Jesuits to murder the King.

issued by the general of that order, to various noblemen and gentlemen, investing them with all the great offices of the state. He swore that Coleman, and Sir George Wakeman, the Queen's physician, were in the plot, and that for 15,000*l.* the latter had engaged to poison the King. Success emboldened him to soar still higher; and after declaring to the House of Lords, that he had named all the persons of rank involved in the plot, he had the effrontery to accuse the Queen of being concerned in it, under circumstances the most improbable; besides that the charge was discountenanced by the whole tenour of her life.

"It was plain, that postnate to the narrative of Oates, there was a design formed for cutting off the Queen by a false accusation, and thereupon this evidence was given, and Bedloe, another evidence for the plot, chimed in. It seems the not venturing so high in Oates's narrative was thought to be an error to be retrieved by additional swearing. It was not a cabal of ordinary authority could encourage Oates to come to the bar of the House of Commons, and say, 'Aye, Tantus Oates, accause Catherine Queen of England of haigh traison.' Upon which the King immediately confined him, and it might have been worse, if some people had not taken his part, who were considerable enough to give umbrage that it would be more prudent to set him at liberty again, which was done accordingly. The King was pleased to say, 'They think I have a mind to a new wife; but for all that I will not see an innocent woman abused.' This passage ought to be remembered to the honour of the King's justice: certainly if his Majesty had given way, the Queen had been very ill used*."

* North's Examen, p. 186. Oates, in addition to his personal peculiarities, which are described in a passage presently to be quoted, was remarkable for a drawling way of speech, which is caricatured above, "I, Titus Oates," &c.

Oates's exaltation was a tempting bait, and other witnesses of infamous character began to appear. In November Coleman was tried, convicted, and executed on the joint evidence of Oates and Bedloe. There was sufficient disagreement between the statements made by the former upon the trial and before the council, to cause them to be received with much suspicion; but Chief Justice Scroggs, after manifesting throughout a most scandalous bias against the prisoner, charged the jury in a style of which this is a specimen: "The things the prisoner is accused of are of two sorts: the one is to subvert the Protestant religion, and to introduce Popery; the other was to destroy and kill the King. The evidence likewise was of two sorts; the one by letters of his own handwriting, and the other by witnesses *viva voce*. The former he seems to confess, the other totally to deny... You are to examine what these letters import in themselves, and what consequences are naturally to be deduced from them. That which is plainly intended is to bring in the Roman Catholic, and subvert the Protestant religion. That which is by consequence intended, is the killing the King, as being the most likely means to introduce that which as it is apparent from his letters, was designed to be brought in." It would be a waste of words to point out the monstrous wickedness of this inference. The nature of the letters has been already described; that they contained schemes hostile to the constitution there is no doubt, though not, it should seem, such as bore out a charge of treason, least of all against the life of the King. And it is worthy of observation, that after dwelling at length upon the letters, Scroggs says not one word concerning the evidence of the witnesses. Justice Jones worthily seconded his principal: "You must find the prisoner guilty, or bring in two persons perjured."*

* Howell's State Trials, vol. vii. p. 56.

The next act of the tragedy was the trial of Ireland, Fenwick, and Whitebread, three Jesuits; and Grove and Pickering, two servants in the Queen's chapel. Oates and Dugdale swore that the priests had conspired the death of the King, and at their instigation the latter had agreed to shoot him, which they attempted three several times; but that on one occasion the flint of their pistol was loose; on another there was no priming; and on the third no powder in the barrel; with other circumstances equally childish and improbable. Scroggs acknowledged that the case had broken down against Whitebread and Fenwick, and in defiance of all principles of justice, remanded them that further evidence might be procured*. The other three were condemned and executed. Whitebread, Fenwick, and three other Jesuits, afterwards underwent the same fate.

In July Wakeman and others were tried. "Scroggs summed up very favourably for the prisoners; far contrary to his former practice. The truth is, that this was looked upon as the Queen's trial, as well as Wakeman's. The prisoners were acquitted, and now the witnesses saw they were blasted; and they were enraged on it, which they vented with much spite against Scroggs†."

"July 18, 1679. I went early to the Old Bailey sessions-house, to the famous trial of Sir G. Wakeman, one of the Queen's physicians, and three Benedictine monks: the first (who I take to be a worthy gentleman, abhorring such a fact) for intending to poison the King: the others as accomplices to carry on the plot to subvert the government and introduce Popery. The bench was crowded with the judges, the lord mayor, justices, and innumerable spectators. The chief accusers, Dr. Oates (as he called himself), and one Bedloe, a man of inferior note. Their testimonies were not so pregnant, and I fear, much of it upon

* State Trials, vol. vii. p. 120. † Burnet, p. 168.

hearsay; but swearing positively to some particulars which drew suspicion upon their truth, nor did circumstances so agree as to give either the bench or the jury so entire satisfaction as was expected. After therefore a long and tedious trial of nine hours, the jury brought them in not guilty, to the extraordinary triumph of the Papists, and 'without sufficient disadvantage and reflections on the witnesses, especially Oates and Bedloe. This was a happy day for the lords in the Tower, who, expecting their trial, had this day gone against the prisoners at the bar, would all have been in the utmost hazard. For my part I look upon Oates as a vain insolent man, puffed up with the favour of the Commons for having discovered something really true, more especially as detecting the dangerous intrigue of Coleman, proved out of his own letters, and of a general design which the Jesuitical party of the Papists ever had, and still have, to ruin the church of England; but that he was trusted with those great secrets he pretended, or had any solid ground for what he accused divers noblemen of, I have many reasons to induce my contrary belief."

This, the first acquittal, was indeed equivalent to a sentence of perjury against the witnesses; whose credit began to be shaken by the contradictions in their evidence, discoverable by any who would calmly look for them; and by the constancy with which all the condemned met death, disclaiming to the last the justice of their sentence. Several trials followed with various success. Soon after the meeting of the Parliament in 1678, Lord Stafford, with four other Popish lords, had been committed to the Tower upon Oates's depositions. The parliament was dissolved in January 1679. Another was called in March, and the question of the Popish lords proceeded in; but this also was

* So in the original. The sense seems to require 'not without.'—Evelyn's Memoirs.

dissolved in May, without the accused being brought to trial, and they remained in confinement till a third parliament was called in October 1680, soon after which it was resolved, "That the House will proceed with the prosecution of the lords in the Tower, and forthwith begin with William, Viscount Stafford." Oates, Dugdale, and Turberville, two more witnesses of the same class, gave evidence upon which he was condemned. Stafford was an aged man, and of little estimation; yet he defended himself, prisoners not being then allowed benefit of counsel, with dignity and constancy, through a long trial of six days. He urged with much force the infamy of Oates.

"Dec. 6, 1680. One thing my Lord said, as to Oates, which I confess did exceedingly affect me; that a person who during his depositions should so vauntingly brag, that though he went over to the church of Rome, yet he never was a Papist, nor of their religion, all the time that he seemed to apostatize from the Protestant, but only as a spy; though he confessed he took their sacraments, worshipped their images, went through all their oaths, and discipline of their proselytes, swearing secrecy and to be faithful, but with intent to come over again and betray them, that such a hypocrite, that had so deeply prevaricated as even to turn idolater (for so we of the church of England term it), attesting God so solemnly that he was entirely theirs, and devoted to their interests, and consequently (as he pretended) trusted; I say that the witness of such a profligate wretch should be admitted against the life of a peer, this my Lord looked upon as a monstrous thing, and such as must needs redound to the dishonour of our religion and nation. And verily I am of his lordship's opinion: such a man's testimony should not be taken against the life of a dog. But the merit of something material which he discovered against Coleman, put him in such

esteem with the parliament, that now I fancy he stuck at nothing, and thought every body was to take what he said for gospel. The consideration of this in some other circumstances began to stagger me: particularly how it was possible that one who went among the Papists on such a design, and pretended to be intrusted with so many letters and commissions from the Pope and the party, nay and delivered them to so many great persons, should not reserve one of them to show, nor so much as one copy of any commission, which he who had such dexterity in opening letters might certainly have done, to the undeniable conviction of those that he accused: but as I said he gained credit on Coleman; but as to others whom he so madly flew upon, I am little inclined to believe his testimony, he being so slight a person, so passionate, ill bred, and of such impudent behaviour; nor is it likely that such piercing politicians as the Jesuits, should trust him with so high and so dangerous secrets*."

Burnet gives his own words: "I asked him, what were the arguments which prevailed on him to change his religion, and go over to the church of Rome. He upon that stood up, and laid his hands on his breast and said, 'God and his holy angels knew that he had never changed, but that he had gone among them on purpose to betray them.' This gave me such a character of him, that I could have no regard to any thing he either said or swore after that†."

Stafford died with dignity and calmness, such as to make a deep impression on the spectators. Their behaviour was decent, and even compassionate, and a general belief in his dying protestations of innocence was expressed. He was the last victim, strictly speaking, of this impudent and atrocious forgery, upon which fourteen other men had been previously executed.

* Evelyn's Memoirs.

† Hist. of his own Times, p. 428.

Many Romish priests also were condemned, and, in part at least, suffered death upon a statute of Elizabeth, making it treason for such to be found within the realm.

It is not from any resemblance in the circumstances of the times, nor from similarity of character, though indeed that is considerable, that Cleon and Ortes have been grouped together, so much as to show that cruelty and credulity are equally the growth of ancient and modern times, and that there have always been periods when it has been easy for men, contemptible in rank, talent, and character, so they be possessed of a certain low cunning and a plenitude of impudence, to govern the public mind by availing themselves of its prejudices. Diminish these prejudices in the smallest degree, in the same degree is the liability to this degrading and mischievous bondage reduced. A startling warning may be drawn from the comparison of the two periods. Had England resembled in circumstances, and form of government, the tyrant-democracy of Athens, there is strong reason to think that the fearful enormities committed by that profligate city against her dependents might have been equalled in the extermination of the obnoxious sect, as we know that the accusation of nonconformity, and the charge of conspiring to establish a tyranny*,

* The readiness of the Athenian to listen to unfounded and malicious accusations has been noticed in the Knights, and is a favourite subject of ridicule and reproach throughout Aristophanes. The following passage of the Wasps is worth notice —

> Be the fault great or small, this cuckoo song
> Of tyranny rings ever in our ears.
> These fifty years it slept, but now the cry
> Is handed even at Billingsgate, is stale
> As mackarel in July. Suppose a turbot
> Should suit your palate, straight the spirit seller
> Next stall exclaims, "Why this is tyranny!
> No tastes aristocratical in Athens!"

formed equally ready handles of insult and oppression. Happily the balanced and complicated form of the constitution, and the impossibility of moving with one accord a great nation, delivered our ancestors from this extremity of guilt. May the hazard which they incurred serve as a beacon, to warn men against suffering themselves to be hoodwinked and goaded by their fears into forgetfulness alike of reason and charity.

It may be some consolation to any whose patriotism is shocked by the ready belief of Oates's narrative, to know that the proverbial credulity of the English was fully equalled by the gullibility of the acute and polished Athenians*. Gross as was the imposture,

> Or if you buy anchovies, and demand,
> Gratis, a leek for sauce, some herb-woman,
> Squinting, growls out, "So you're for tyranny,
> Dost think the state will furnish you with garnish?"
>
> Ver. 488.

* See Aristophanes, every where, more particularly in the Knights. Demus demands from Cleon his ring of office:—

> Why how now, rogue,
> This is no ring of mine—it tallies not
> With my device, or much my eyes deceive me.
> *Saus.* Allow me, sir.—what might be your impression?
> *Dem.* A roasted thrium[1], with thick fat enclosed.
> *Saus.* (*looking at the ring*) I see no thrium.
> *Dem.* What the impression then?
> *Saus.* A wide-mouthed gull, seated upon a rock,
> In act to make a speech.
>
> *Mitchell*, p. 215. See also ver. 1260. (Ed. Bekk.)

[1] In case the reader should have any curiosity about Athenian cookery, the following is the receipt for a thrium. Take a certain quantity of rice, fine flour or grain, boil it till enough done, then pour off the water, and mix it with soft cheese and a few eggs: roll the mixture in fig-leaves, tie it in a cloth, and stew it for some time in gravy. Then remove the cloth, pour over it a plate of fresh boiling honey, and let it stew till it becomes yellow, observing to turn it continually. Serve it up with the honey poured over it. Another receipt gives brains and cheese, mixed up with a rich and highly-esteemed fish-pickle, as the ingredients.

it was yet not without some foundation in truth; and in the then alarming crisis of public affairs, we may imagine how it was that eager politicians greedily swallowed a story adapted to their prepossessions, although candid and dispassionate observers, like Evelyn, saw immediately how little of it was entitled to credit. Yet even Evelyn was partly a believer, as also Dryden, whose party prejudices certainly did not lead him to side with the Whigs.

That plot, the nation's curse,
Bad in itself, but represented worse;
Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried;
With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied;
Not weighed and winnowed by the multitude,
But swallowed in the mass, unchewed and crude.
Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies
To please the fools and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing, or believing all.

Absalom and Achitophel, part I.

The following passages will probably amuse the reader, and convey a good idea of the character of Oates himself:—

"Titus Oates was the son of an anabaptist teacher, who afterwards conformed and got into orders, and took a benefice as this his son did. He was proud and ill-natured, haughty but ignorant. He had been complained of for some very indecent expressions concerning the mysteries of the Christian religion. He was once presented for perjury. But he got to be chaplain in one of the king's ships, from which he was dismissed upon charges of gross profligacy. * * * * He seemed inclined to be instructed in the Popish religion. One Hutchinson, a Jesuit, had that work put upon him. * * * He told me that

Oates and the Jesuits were always in ill terms. They did not allow Oates above nine-pence a day, of which he complained much; and Hutchinson relieved him often. They wished they could be well rid of him, and sent him beyond sea, being in very ill terms with him. This made Hutchinson conclude that they had not at that time trusted Oates with their secrets; Oates was kept for some time at St. Omers, and was thence sent through France into Spain, and was now returned to England. He had been long acquainted with Tongue, and made his first discovery to him*."

"Oates was a low man, of an ill cut, very short neck, and his visage and features were most particular. His mouth was the centre of his face, and a compass there would sweep his nose, forehead, and chin within the perimeter. In a word, he was a most consummate cheat, blasphemer, vicious, perjured, impudent, and saucy foul-mouthed wretch; and were it not for the truth of history and the great emotions in the public which he was the cause of, not fit (so little deserving) to be remembered†."

"Oates would never say all that he knew, for that was not consistent with the uncertainty of events. For he could not foresee what sort of evidence there might be occasion for, nor whom (it might be thought fit) to accuse. All which matters were kept in reserve to be launched or not, as occasion, like fair weather, invited, or flaws discouraged. And having once said, there was all he knew (if he had been so overseen), it had ended the plot, and then there could have been no further suspense or expectation, as was afterwards continually kept on foot, in hopes that at length the bottom of the plot would come up. In the mean time the faction could calumniate any person, as the Duke, the Queen, and even the good King himself, as being in the plot, much more any one that was loyal in the ministry and magistracy, and

* Burnet, p. 421. 5. † North. Examen. p. 225.

so keep all in one. And all the while it went about in whispers, that strange things would appear, if they could but once come to the bottom of the plot, and each one's evil imagination was to inform what that was, as will fully appear afterwards. When Oates was examined in the House of Commons, and was asked if he knew of any further designs against his Majesty, &c., instead of answering that question, he told a tale of a fox and a goose, that the fox, to see if the ice would bear him and his goose, first carried over a stone as heavy as the goose. And neither then nor ever after, during his whole life, would he be brought to say, he had told all that he knew*."

"Oates was now (the author is speaking of a time soon after his first examination before parliament) in his trine exaltation; his plot in full force, efficacy, and virtue: he walked about with his guards (assigned) for fear of the Papists murdering him. He had lodgings in Whitehall, and £1200 per annum pension. And no wonder, after he had the impudence to cry to the House of Lords in plain terms, that if they would not help him he must help himself. He put on an episcopal garb (except his lawn sleeves), silk gown and cassock, great hat, satin hatband and rose, and was called, or most blasphemously called himself, 'the Saviour of the nation.' Whoever he pointed at was taken up and committed, so that many people got out of his way, as from a blast, and glad that they could prove their last two years' conversation. The very breath of him was pestilential, and if it brought not imprisonment or death over such on whom it fell, it surely poisoned reputation, and left good Protestants arrant Papists; and, something worse than that, in danger of being put in the plot as traitors†."

"He threatened me indeed with a parliament, but

* North. Examen, p. 176. † Ib. p. 204.

that is a course of speech he has got. If the prisoners but ask a new comer for his garnish, the master of the prison shall be told of a parliament. A bishop shall not suspend a minister for refusing to officiate according to the canon, but he is presently threatened with a parliament. If the university shall not think fit to allow Mr. Oates his degree, the lawn sleeves are to be ruffled next parliament. I was walking awhile since only over the outer court at Whitehall innocently about my business, and because I did not cap him over the square, as the boys do fellows at Cambridge, 'Squire L'Estrange,' says he, 'we shall have a parliament,' twirling his hat about between his finger and thumb, with a look and action not to be expressed *."

The credit of the plot and of its author declined together. In 1681, Oates appeared as a witness in defence of one Colledge, better known as the 'Protestant joiner,' a busy man and a zealot against Popery, who was accused of treason upon no better grounds than had served his own party for the destruction of so many Papists. The court was eager for revenge, and by no means scrupulous concerning the means of obtaining it: the witnesses, who had supported the plot, were indifferent which way they perjured themselves, so long as perjury was profitable, and swore against Colledge as readily as against the Jesuits. Oates therefore, who adhered to his old friends, be this one thing recorded to his credit, was brought into collision with his former associates, and a scene of abuse passed between him and them in open court, which is too long for quotation, but will satisfy any person of the infamy of at least one, probably of both parties. (State Trials, vol. viii. p. 628.) Towards the end of Charles's reign, when the discontinuance of parliaments threw all power into the

* L'Estrange, Dialogue between Zekiel and Ephraim.

hands of the court, and the infamous Jefferies was a ready minister of oppression, Oates was prosecuted by the Duke of York for libel, and damages assessed at £100,000. This was but the beginning of his misfortunes. In 1688, soon after the accession of James, he was convicted of perjury upon two indictments, the one charging him with having sworn that he was at a consultation of Jesuits in London, when he was really at St. Omers; the other with having deposed to Ireland's presence in London at a time when he was gone into Staffordshire. The sentence passed upon him was most savage and illegal, and moreover executed with such severity as to produce the belief that he was not meant to survive it. It is in itself a curiosity, and as such, as well as for the instruction of any who do not duly appreciate the blessings of an incorrupt judicature, though long, it shall be given entire.

Justice Wilkens. "I hope I have not been thought a man of ill nature, and I confess nothing has been so great a regret to me in my place and station as to give judgment and pronounce the sentence of law against my fellow-subjects, my fellow-creatures—but as to you, Mr. Oates, I cannot say my fellow-christian. Yet in this case when I consider your offence, and the dismal effects that have followed upon it, I cannot say I have any remorse in giving judgment upon you. And therefore having told you my thoughts shortly about your crime, and how readily I pronounce your sentence, I shall now declare the judgment of the court upon you; and it is this:—

"First, the court does order for a fine, that you pay 1000 marks upon each indictment.

"Secondly, that you be stripped of all your canonical habits.

"Thirdly, the court doth award, that you do stand upon the pillory, and in the pillory here before West-

minster Hall gate, upon Monday next, for an hour s time, between the hours of ten and twelve, with a paper over your head (which you must first walk with round about to all the courts in Westminster Hall) declaring your crime. And that is upon the first indictment.

" Fourthly (on the second indictment), upon Tuesday you shall stand upon and in the pillory at the Royal Exchange, in London, for the space of an hour, between the hours of twelve and two, with the same inscription.

" You shall upon the next Wednesday be whipped from Aldgate to Newgate.

" Upon Friday you shall be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn by the hands of the common hangman.

" But, Mr. Oates, we cannot but remember there were several particular times you swore false about, and therefore, as annual commemorations, that it may be known to all people as long as you live, we have taken special care of you for an annual punishment.

" Upon the 24th of April, every year, as long as you live, you are to stand upon the pillory, and in the pillory at Tyburn, just opposite to the gallows, for the space of an hour, between the hours of ten and twelve.

" You are to stand upon and in the pillory here, at Westminster Hall gate, every 9th August, in every year, so long as you live. And that it may be known what we mean by it, it is to remember what he swore about Mr. Ireland's being in town between the 8th and 12th of August.

" You are to stand upon and in the pillory at Charing Cross, upon the 10th of August, every year during your life, for an hour, between ten and twelve.

" The like over against the Temple gate upon the 11th.

"And upon the 2d September (which is another notorious time, which you cannot but be remembered of), you are to stand upon and in the pillory, for the space of one hour, between twelve and two, at the Royal Exchange; all this you are to do every year during your life, and to be committed close prisoner as long as you live.

"This I pronounce to be the judgment of the court upon you for your offences. And I must tell you plainly that if it had been in my power to have carried it further, I should not have been unwilling to have given sentence of death upon you, for I am sure you deserve it*."

Burnet says, "But now the sitting of the parliament of England came on. And as a preparative to it, Oates was convicted of perjury upon the evidence of the witnesses from St. Omers, who had been brought over before to discredit his testimony. Now juries were so prepared as to believe more easily than formerly. So he was condemned to have his priestly habit taken from him, to be a prisoner for life, to be set in the pillory in all the public places through the city, and ever after that set in the pillory four times a year, and to be whipped by the common hangman from Aldgate to Newgate one day, and the next from Newgate to Tyburn, which was executed with so much rigour that his back appeared to be all over flead. This was thought too little if he were guilty, and too much if he were innocent; and was illegal in all the parts of it. For as the secular court could not order the ecclesiastical habit to be taken from him, so to condemn a man to perpetual imprisonment was not in the power of the court. And the extreme rigour of such whipping was without a precedent. Yet he, who was an original in all things, bore this with a constancy that amazed all those who

* State Trials, vol. x. p. 1316.

saw it. So that this treatment did rather raise his reputation than sink it*."

So soon as the heat of the plot was over, Charles reduced his pension one-half, and ultimately deprived him of it altogether. After the Revolution he was pardoned, "redintegrated at court, and admitted to a pension of £400 per annum, at which he was very wroth, for Charles gave him £600, 'and sure,' he said, 'William will give me more.' He sought by Act of Parliament to have his judgment for perjury reversed, but he could never obtain a swearing capacity again. The Earl of Danby (then Leeds) knew the danger of that, and would indeed have his sentence reversed, that is, having been whipped from Newgate to Tyburn, would fain have had him whipped back from Tyburn to Newgate. The power of swearing is formidable to great and small, and his lordship was within an ace of being put in the plot for Godfrey's murder†." Here ends his public life; he died in 1705, having once more changed his religion, and entered into the communion of the Baptists. To the last many persons adhered to him, and considered him a martyr to the Protestant cause. In conclusion, we subjoin his character, as drawn by Calamy, whose temper and opinions alike free his testimony from suspicion.

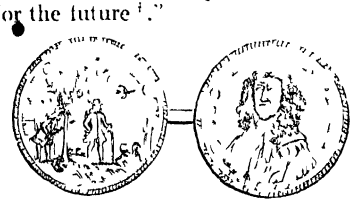
"Dr. Oates was a man of invincible courage and resolution, and endured what would have killed a great many others. He occasioned a strange turn in the nation, after a general lethargy, that had been of some years' continuance. By awakening us out of sleep he was an instrument in the hand of God for

* Hist. of his own Times, p. 627. In Narcissus Luttrell's MS. Brief Narration, &c., it is said, under date August 11, 1688, "Titus Oates stood in the pillory at Charing Cross, according to annual custom." State Trials, vol. x. p. 1317.

† North, Examen, p. 225.

our preservation. Yet after all, he was but a sorry foul-mouthed wretch, as I can testify from what I once heard from him in company.

"I have been informed at Westminster that Dr. Oates was a frequent auditor of my predecessor, Mr. Alsop, and moved for leave to come to the Lord's table with his society, but that an honest man of the congregation upon that occasion spoke freely against him, as one so irregular in his life as to be very unfit for church communion. The doctor afterwards meeting Mr. Alsop, told him that man had sadly abused him, and upon that account he vehemently complained as one that was injuriously dealt with. Mr. Alsop cried out, 'Prove him a liar, doctor! prove him a liar!' which it would have been well for him if he could have done. But he really bore an indifferent character at Westminster, and notwithstanding all the service he had done, there were so many things concurring to lessen his credit, as makes it very hard to distinguish between what was true and what was false in his depositions. For which reason I must own that I am the less surprised, that the parliament after the Revolution should leave him under a brand, and incapacitate him for being a witness for the future[1]."



Medal of Oates. The reverse represents the pretended scheme to shoot Charles II walking in St. James's Park. Legend: The Popish Plot discovered by me, T. Oates, D.D.

We may conclude the chapter with a short re-

[1] Life of Talents, p. 120

ference to that most remarkable transaction, the mutilation of the Hermæ, which occurred B.C. 415, just before the Sicilian expedition, and in its consequences bears a striking analogy to the passage in history which we have just related. The Hermæ were square pillars, surmounted by a head of the god, Hermes, or Mercury, which, in compliance with an ancient custom, were placed at the entrances of temples and houses. Most of these throughout Athens were defaced in the course of one night. A great sensation was excited in the city; for the circumstance was held to be of evil omen to the important enterprise just about to be commenced, and moreover to indicate the existence of a plot to overthrow the democracy. Alcibiades was accused among others, but no evidence could be obtained to bring home the offence to any one: the excitement passed off for a time, and he was ordered with the army to Sicily. But men's minds were unsettled, and agitated by terrors of they knew not what, aggravated by designing persons for party ends. "From the affair of the Mercuries, a plot was inferred for the establishment of oligarchy or tyranny, and the irritation was cherished by continual discourses of what Athens had suffered through the Pisistratidæ. On the slightest suspicion, on the most discreditable evidence, men, the most respected, were imprisoned; alarm increased with the number of accusations, and each found readier credit than the last. At length Andocides, one of the imprisoned, seeing no other hope of escape, and hoping by the sacrifice of a few to save the rest, and to tranquillize the city, confessed the crime, and accused some others, whether truly or falsely is not known. The people received the information with joy; and setting free the informer, and those whom he had cleared, tried and executed the others. The proof was very

inadequate, and the condemnation most unjust; but the panic was in great measure abated*."

In this jealous temper, Alcibiades, though not included in the accusation, was summoned home from Sicily. He fled to Sparta, and by his powerful talents contributed very principally to produce those reverses which subsequently overtook the Athenians. The account of this remarkable transaction is given in Thucydides vi. c. 27, 60, and most completely in the speech of Andocides de Mysteriis, which is contained in Bekker's collection of the Greek orators.

* Greece, p. 74.

Chapter VI.

Athenian expedition against Sicily—Siege of Syracuse—Retreat and destruction of the army—Retreat of Ney in Russia—Retreat of Sir John Hawkwood in Italy.

We now come to the Sicilian expedition, and request the reader's patience if we dwell longer than usual on the closing scene of an undertaking, described by its historian as "the greatest that happened in this war, or at all, that we have heard of, among the Grecians, being to the victors most glorious, and most calamitous to the vanquished*." The total destruction of the army of Athens struck a deadly blow at her greatness, though she struggled most energetically to retrieve her loss, and, through the want of able leaders at Sparta, nearly succeeded. But the scale was turned against her, and from this time forwards she fought an uphill battle.

In the seventeenth year of the war, B. C. 415, the Athenians, at the suggestion of Alcibiades, resolved to send a very powerful armament to Sicily, nominally to protect the little republic of Egesta against Selinus and Syracuse, but really to re-establish the Ionian interest in the island. We may observe that Sicily was colonized partly by Ionian, partly by Dorian Greeks, and that the former naturally favoured the Athenians, the latter the Lacedæmonians, as the heads of their respective races. At present the Dorian race, at the head of which stood Syracuse, was by far the more powerful: and alarm was felt, or at least pretended, that unless checked by a powerful

*Thucyd. vii. 87.

diversion at home, they might get all Sicily into their hands, and then unite with their Peloponnesian kinsmen to pull down that object of universal jealousy, the Athenian empire. Moved therefore by the entreaties of the Egestans, by these political arguments, and most of all by the desire of conquest, the Athenians "resolved to go again to Sicily, and if they could, wholly to subdue it, being for the most part ignorant both of the greatness of the island and of the multitude of people, as well Greeks as Barbarians, that inhabited the same, and that they undertook a war, not much less than the war against the Peloponnesians *."

Nicias, of whose cautious and unenterprising temper we have before spoken, saw and remonstrated against the impolicy of hazarding the flower of the state in a distant and dangerous warfare, while many of its revolted subjects remained unsubdued: but his warning was unheeded, and he was required, in conjunction with Alcibiades and Lamachus, to assume the command of this expedition, which he so entirely disapproved. Nicias, a man of courage in the field, was too timid to struggle against the popular will: he submitted, but still endeavoured to damp the eagerness of his countrymen, by exaggerating the force requisite to ensure success. A hundred triremes, he said, with 5000 heavy armed infantry, and archers and slingers in proportion, were the least they could send. Here he rather overshot himself; the force demanded was immediately voted, and no further pretext for dissuasion or denial remained. The armament, including the crews of the triremes, is estimated by Mitford to have contained at least 30,000 men.

Never was an enterprise undertaken with better will. Those who were engaged in it vied with each other in the splendour of their armour and equip-

* Thucyd. vi. 1.

ment, and far from finding any difficulty to complete the levy, the whole of the citizens would willingly have gone in a body; "the old men, upon hope to subdue the place they went to, or that at least so great a power could not miscarry; and the young men, upon desire to see a foreign country, and to gaze, making little doubt but to return with safety. As for the common sort, and the soldiers, they made account to gain by it not only their wages for the time, but also so to amplify the state in power as that their stipend should endure for ever. So that, through the vehement desire thereunto of the most, they also that liked it not, for fear, if they held up their hands against it, to be thought evil affected to the state, were content to let it pass *."

"The summer being now half spent, they put to sea for Sicily. The Athenians themselves, and as many of their confederates as were at Athens upon the day appointed, betimes in the morning came down into Peiræus, and went aboard to take sea. With them came down in a manner the whole multitude of the city, as well inhabitants as strangers: the inhabitants, to follow after such as belonged unto them, some their friends, some their kinsmen, and some their children: filled both with hope and lamentations; hope of conquering what they went for, and lamentation as being in doubt whether ever they should see each other any more, considering what a way they were to go from their own territory.

"And now when they were to leave one another to danger, they apprehended the greatness of the same more than they had done before, when they decreed the expedition. Nevertheless their present strength, by the abundance of every thing before their eyes prepared for the journey, gave them heart again in beholding it. But the strangers and other multitude

* Thucyd. vi. 24.

came only to see the show, as of a worthy and incredible design. For this preparation, being the first Grecian power that ever went out of Greece from one only city, was the most sumptuous and the most glorious of all that ever had been set forth before it, to that day.

"For the shipping, it was elaborate with a great deal of cost, both of the captains * of galleys, and of the city. For the state allowed a drachma † a day to every mariner, and gave of unequipped galleys sixty swift ships of war and forty transports for the conveyance of soldiers. And the captains of galleys both put into them the most able servants ‡, and besides the wages of the state, unto the [uppermost bank of oars, called the] Thranitæ §, and to the servants ‡, gave somewhat of their own; and bestowed great cost otherwise every one upon his own galley, both in the badges ‖ and other rigging, each one striving to the utmost to have his galley, both in some ornament, and also in swiftness to exceed the rest.

"And for the land forces, they were levied with exceeding great choice, and every man endeavoured

* τριήραρχοι. The heavy expense of equipping ships of war was thrown chiefly upon individuals of wealth. Sometimes, as here, the state provided ships, and the trierarch only the equipment; at others the trierarch was obliged to build the vessels. The subject is too intricate to be treated in a note; the curious reader will find it fully handled in Wolff's Prolegomena to the Oration against Leptines. See also a short notice in Dr. Arnold's note, vi. 31.

† About nine-pence halfpenny.

‡ ὑπηρεσίας. Petty officers, as the pilot, boatswain, &c. See Arnold's notes on the passage.

§ Θρανῖται. There being three banks of oars one above another, the uppermost were called Thranitæ, the middlemost Zeugitæ, and the lowest Thalamitæ, whereof the thranitæ managed the longest oar, and therefore in respect of their greater labour might deserve a greater pay.

‖ Σημεῖα. The images which being set on the fore-part of the galley, did give it the name for the most part.

to excel his fellow in the bravery of his arms and utensils that belonged to his person. Insomuch as amongst themselves it begat quarrel about whose office should be the most bravely filled, but amongst other Grecians a conceit that it was an ostentation rather of their power and riches, than a preparation against an enemy. For if a man enter into account of the expense, as well of the public as of private men that went the voyage; namely, of the public, what was spent already in the business, and what was to be given to the commanders to carry with them: and of private men, what every one had bestowed and had still to bestow upon his person, and every captain on his galley; and beside what every one was likely, over and above his allowance from the state, to expend on provision for so long a warfare; and what men carried with them on trading speculations, both soldiers and merchants, he will find the whole sum carried out of the city to amount to a great many talents. And the armament was no less noised for the strange boldness of the attempt, and gloriousness of the show, than for its superiority over those against whom it was to go, for the length of the voyage, and for that it was undertaken with so vast future hopes, in respect of their present power.

"After they were all aboard, and all things laid in that they meant to carry with them, silence was commanded by the trumpet; and after the wine had been carried about to the whole army, and all, as well the generals as the soldiers, had poured libations out of gold and silver cups, they made their prayers, such as by the law were appointed for before their taking sea; not in every galley apart, but all together, the herald pronouncing them: and the company from the shore, both of the city and whosoever else wished them well, prayed with them. And when they had

sung the Pæan, and ended the health, they put forth to sea*."

For the actions and fortunes of the expedition, we must refer the reader to the History of Greece, contenting ourselves with such a mere outline as may render the termination of it, with which alone we are concerned, intelligible. Alcibiades was recalled almost immediately, in consequence of the jealousy excited by the mutilation of the Hermæ; Lamachus was killed in battle, and thus Nicias was left in the sole charge of an enterprise of which he disapproved and despaired. The first campaign was wasted in inactivity. In the second, siege was laid to Syracuse, a city of large extent and great natural strength; and all promised fairly for success until Gylippus, a Spartan of the royal blood, arrived with 700 Lacedæmonians, broke through the besiegers' lines, and threw himself into the city. This reinforcement, and the skill and enterprise of the Spartan general, turned the fortune of the siege, which from thenceforth is a series of disasters. In the following winter, Nicias, weary of his command and broken in health, sent home to represent the unpromising situation of affairs, and to request leave to resign; but he received in answer an injunction to remain, with the assurance that powerful succours should be sent out. Accordingly, early in the spring, Demosthenes, the victor at Pylos, was despatched with a strong reinforcement, consisting of seventy-three triremes and about 5000 heavy-armed infantry. That able general made one powerful attempt to change the fortune of the siege, and on its failure recommended an immediate retreat. But Nicias, who was brave enough in the field, but very deficient in moral courage, dared

* Thucyd. vi. 30, 32.

not to return unauthorized by the people. He retained his station, therefore, though hopeless of success, except from the exertions of some malcontent Syracusans with whom he maintained correspondence. Meanwhile the army was wasting under sickness, arising from the low and marshy ground on which it was encamped: and the Syracusans eagerly prosecuted their success, and at last cut off from the besiegers the possibility of retreating by sea, by utterly defeating the Athenian fleet. To act any longer on the offensive was out of the question; the only hope of safety was instantly to break up the siege and march into the interior, where the army, yet powerful, might find among the friendly Sicels, a native race who still occupied the interior of the island, a safe and plentiful retreat until assistance could be sent them, or further measures concerted.

"It was a lamentable departure, not only for one point of their condition, that they marched away with the loss of their whole fleet, and that instead of their great hopes, they had endangered both themselves and the state, but also for the dolorous objects which were presented both to the eye and mind of every of them in particular in the leaving of their camp. For the dead lying unburied, when any one saw his friend on the ground, it struck him at once both with fear and grief. But the living that were sick or wounded, both grieved them more than the dead, and were more miserable. For with entreaties and lamentations they put them to a stand, pleading to be taken along by whomsoever they saw of their followers or familiars, and hanging on the necks of their comrades, and following as far as they were able. And if the strength of any person failed him, it was not with few entreaties or little lamentation that he was there left. Insomuch as the whole army filled with tears, and irresolute, could hardly get away, though

the place were hostile, and they had suffered already, and feared to suffer in the future more than with tears could be expressed, but hung down their heads and generally blamed themselves. For they seemed nothing else, but even the people of some great city expunged by siege, and making their escape. For the whole number that marched were no less one with another than 40,000 men. Of which not only the ordinary sort carried every one what he thought he should have occasion to use, but also the heavy infantry and horsemen, contrary to their custom, carried their victuals under their arms, partly for want, and partly for distrust of their servants*, who from time to time ran over to the enemy; but at this time went the greatest number: and yet what they carried was not enough to serve the turn. For not a jot more provision was left remaining in the camp. Moreover the sufferings of others, and that equal division of misery, which is some alleviation in that we suffer with many, were not now thought to contain even thus much of relief. And the rather, because they considered from what splendour and glory which they enjoyed before, into how low an estate they were now fallen: for never had so great a reverse befallen a Grecian army. For whereas they came with purpose to enslave others, they departed in greater fear of being made slaves themselves; and instead of prayers and hymns of victory, with which they put to sea, they abandoned their undertaking with sounds of very different signification; and whereas they came out seamen, they departed landmen, and relied not upon their naval forces, but

* Grecian citizens on service were always attended by slaves, as we have often had occasion to observe, who served as light infantry. The Athenians, however, also employed regular light-armed mercenaries, archers, and slingers from Crete and elsewhere.

upon their men of arms. Nevertheless, in respect of the great danger yet hanging over them, these present miseries seemed all but tolerable.

" Nicias perceiving the army to be dejected, and the great change that was in it, came up to the ranks, and encouraged and comforted them, as far as for the present means he was able. And as he went from part to part, he exalted his voice more and more, both as being earnest in his exhortation, and because also he desired that the benefit of his words might reach as far as might be.

" ' Athenians and confederates, we must hope still even in our present estate. Men have been saved ere now from greater dangers than these are. Nor ought you too much to accuse yourselves, either for your losses past, or the undeserved miseries we are now in. Even I myself, that have the advantage of none of you in strength of body, (for you see under what sickness I now labour,) nor am thought inferior to any of you for prosperity past, either in respect of my own private person or otherwise, am nevertheless now in as much danger as the meanest of you. And yet I have worshipped the gods frequently, according to the law, and lived justly and unblamably towards men. For which cause, my hope is still confident of the future; though these calamities, as being not according to the measure of our desert, do indeed make me fear. But they may perhaps cease. For both the enemies have already had sufficient fortune, and the gods, if any of them have been displeased with our voyage, have already sufficiently punished us. Others have invaded their neighbours as well as we; and as their offence, which proceeded of human infirmity, so their punishment also hath been tolerable. And we have reason now both to hope for more favour from the gods (for our case deserveth their pity rather than their hatred),

and also not to despair of ourselves, seeing how good and how many men of arms you are, marching together in order of battle. Make account of this, that wheresoever you please to sit down, there presently of yourselves you are a city, such as not any other in Sicily can either easily sustain if you assault, or remove if you be once seated. Now for your march, that it may be safe and orderly, look to it yourselves, making no other account any of you, but what place soever he shall be forced to fight in, the same if he win it, will be his country and his walls. March you must with diligence, both night and day alike, for our victual is short; and if we can but reach some amicable territory of the Siculi (for these are still firm to us for fear of the Syracusans), then you may think yourselves secure. And notice has been sent to them, with directions to meet us, and to bring us forth some supplies of victual. In sum, soldiers, let me tell you, it is necessary that you be valiant; for there is no place near, where being cowards you can possibly be saved. Whereas if you escape through the enemies at this time, you may every one see again whatsover any where he most desires, and the Athenians may re-erect the great power of their city, how low soever fallen. For the men, not the walls, nor the empty galleys, are the city.'

"Nicias, as he used this hortative, went withal about the army, and restored order wherever he saw it straggling, or the ranks broken. Demosthenes having spoken to the same or like purpose, did as much to those soldiers under him; and they marched forward, those with Nicias in a square battalion, and then those with Demosthenes in the rear. And the men of arms received those that carried the baggage, and the other multitude, within them. And when they were come to the ford of the river Anapus, they there found certain of the Syracusans and their

confederates embattled against them on the bank, but these they put to flight, and having won the passage, marched forward. But the Syracusan horsemen pressed still upon them, and their light-armed plied them with their darts in the flank. This day they marched forty furlongs, and lodged that night at the foot of a certain hill. The next day, as soon as it was light, they marched forwards, about twenty furlongs, and descending into a certain champagne ground, encamped there with intent both to get victual at the houses (for the place was inhabited), and to carry water with them thence; for before them, in the way they were to pass for many furlongs together, there was little to be had. But the Syracusans in the mean time got before them, and cut off their passage with a wall. This was at a steep hill, on either side whereof was the channel of a torrent with steep and rocky banks, and it is called Acræum Lepas*. The next day the Athenians went on. And the horsemen and darters of the Syracusans and their confederates, being a great number of both, pressed them so with their horses and darts, that the Athenians after long fight, were compelled to retire again into the same camp; but now with less victual than before, because the horsemen would suffer them no more to straggle abroad.

"In the morning betimes they dislodged, and put themselves on their march again, and forced their way to the hill which the enemy had fortified, where they found before them the Syracusan foot embattled in great depth above the fortification, for the place itself was but narrow. The Athenians coming up, assaulted the wall, but the shot of the enemy, who were many, and the steepness of the hill (for they could easily cast home from above), making them unable

* The rock of the citadel. So in Cumberland and Westmoreland there are a score of Castle Crags.

to take it, they retired again and rested. There happened withal some claps of thunder and a shower of rain, as usually falleth out at this time of the year, being now near autumn, which further disheartened the Athenians, who thought that also this did tend to their destruction. Whilst they lay still, Gylippus and the Syracusans sent part of their army to raise a wall at their backs in the way they had come, but this the Athenians hindered by sending against them part of theirs. After this the Athenians retiring with their whole army into a more champagne ground, lodged there that night, and the next day went forward again. And the Syracusans, with their darts from every part round about, wounded many of them; and when the Athenians charged they retired, and when they retired the Syracusans charged; and that especially upon the hindmost, that by putting to flight a few, they might terrify the whole army. And for a good while the Athenians in this manner withstood them; and afterwards being gotten five or six furlongs forward, they rested in the plain; and the Syracusans went from them to their own camp.

"This night it was concluded by Nicias and Demosthenes, seeing the miserable estate of their army, and the want already of all necessaries, and that many of their men in many assaults of the enemy were wounded, to leave as many fires lighted as they could, and lead away the army,—not the road they purposed before, but toward the sea, which was the contrary way to that which the Syracusans guarded. Now this whole journey of the army lay not towards Catana, but towards the other side of Sicily, Camarina and Gela, and the cities, as well Grecian as Barbarian, that way. When they had made many fires accordingly, they marched in the night, and (as usually it falleth out in all armies, and most of all in the greatest, to be subject to affright and terror, espe-

cially marching by night, and in hostile ground, and the enemy near) were in confusion. The army of Nicias leading the way, kept together and got far before; but that of Demosthenes, which was the greater half, was both severed from the rest, and marched more disorderly. Nevertheless, by the morning betimes they got to the sea side, and entering into the Helorine way, they went on towards the river Cacyparis, to the end when they came thither to march upwards along the river side, through the heart of the country. For they hoped that this way, the Siculi to whom they had sent, would meet them. When they came to the river, here also they found a certain guard of the Syracusans stopping their passage with a wall and with piles. When they had quickly forced this guard they passed the river, and again marched on to another river called Erineus, for that was the way which the guides directed them*.

"In the mean time the Syracusans and their confederates, as soon as day appeared, and that they knew the Athenians were gone, most of them accusing Gylippus, as if he had let them go with his consent, followed them with speed the same way, which they easily understood they were gone, and about dinner-time overtook them. When they were come up to those with Demosthenes, who were the hindmost, and had marched more slowly and disorderly than the other part had done, as having been put into disorder in the night, they fell upon them and fought. And the Syracusan horsemen hemmed them in, and forced them up into a narrow compass, the more easily now, because they were divided from the rest. Now the army of Nicias was gone by this

* Supposing that the enemy had already occupied the valley of the Cacyparis; and hoping to reach the interior by turning up this valley.

time one hundred* and fifty furlongs further on. For he led away the faster, because he thought not that their safety consisted in staying and fighting voluntarily, but rather in a speedy retreat, and then only fighting when they could not choose. But Demosthenes was both in greater and in more continual toil, in respect that he marched in the rear, and consequently was pressed by the enemy And seeing the Syracusans pursuing him, he went not on, but put his men in order to fight, till by his stay he was encompassed and reduced, he and the Athenians with him, into great disorder. For being shut up within a place enclosed round with a wall, through which there was a road from side to side, and in it a considerable number of olive-trees, they were charged from all sides at once with the enemies' shot. For the Syracusans assaulted them in this kind, and not in close battle, upon very good reason. For to hazard battle against men desperate, was not so much for theirs, as for the Athenians' advantage And besides, their success being now manifest, they spared themselves, that they should not waste men, and thought by this kind of fight, to subdue and take them alive.

"Whereupon after they had plied the Athenians and their confederates, all day long from every side with shot, and saw that with their wounds and other annoyance, they were already tired, Gylippus and the Syracusans and their confederates first made proclamation that if any of the islanders would come over to them, they should be at liberty; and the men of some few cities went over. And by and by they made agreement with all the rest that were with Demosthenes, 'that they should deliver up their arms, and none of them be put to death, neither violently nor by bonds, nor by want of the necessities

* Goeller and Arnold read fifty stadia only.

of life.' And they all yielded to the number of 6000 men, and the silver they had they laid it all down, casting it into the hollow of targets, and filled with the same four targets. And these men they carried presently into the city.

"Nicias and those that were with him attained the same day to the river Erineus, which passing, he caused his army to sit down upon a certain ground, more elevated than the rest; where the Syracusans the next day overtook and told him, that those with Demosthenes had yielded themselves, and willed him to do the like. But he, not believing it, took truce for a horseman to inquire the truth. Upon return of the horseman, and word that they had yielded, he sent a herald to Gylippus and the Syracusans, saying, that he was content to compound on the part of the Athenians, to repay whatsoever money the Syracusans had laid out, so that his army might be suffered to depart; and that till payment of the money were made, he would deliver them hostages, Athenians, every hostage rated at a talent. But Gylippus and the Syracusans refusing the condition, charged them, and having hemmed them in, plied them with shot, as they had done the other army from every side, till evening. This part also of the army was pinched with the want both of victual and other necessaries. Nevertheless, waiting for the quiet of the night, they were about to march; but no sooner took they their arms up, than the Syracusans perceiving it gave the alarm. Whereupon the Athenians finding themselves discovered, sat down again, all but 300, who, breaking by force through the guards, marched as far as they could that night.

"And Nicias when it was day led his army forward, the Syracusans and their confederates still pressing them in the same manner, shooting and darting at them from every side. The Athenians hasted to get

the river Asinarus, not only because they were urged on every side by the assault of the many horsemen, and other multitude, and thought to be more at ease when they were over the river, but out of weariness also and desire to drink. When they were come unto the river, they rushed in without any order, every man striving who should first get over. But the pressing of the enemy made the passage now more difficult; for being forced to take the river in heaps, they fell upon and trampled one another under their feet: and falling amongst the spears and utensils of the army, some perished presently, and others, catching hold of one another, were carried away together down the stream. And not only the Syracusans standing along the farther bank, being a steep one, killed the Athenians with their shot from above, as they were many of them greedily drinking, and troubling one another in the hollow of the river, but the Peloponnesians came also down and slew them with their swords, and those especially that were in the river*. And very soon the water was corrupted; nevertheless they drunk it, foul as it was with blood and mire, and many also fought for it.

"In the end, when many dead lay heaped in the river, and the army was utterly defeated, part at the river, and part (if any got away) by the horsemen, Nicias yielded himself unto Gylippus (having more confidence in him than in the Syracusans), 'to be for his own person at the discretion of him and the Lacedæmonians, and no further slaughter to be made of the soldiers.' Gylippus from thenceforth com-

* "The Syracusan heavy-armed infantry seems to have been of a very inferior description, and never to have encountered the Athenians with effect, except when supported by their cavalry. So the disciplined troops of Peloponnesus, under Gylippus alone, ventured to close with the enemy, while the Syracusans confined themselves to harassing them from a distance with their missiles." —*Arnold.*

manded to take prisoners. So the residue, except such as they secreted * (which were many), they carried alive into the city. They sent also to pursue the 300, which had broken out from the camp in the night, and took them. That which was left together of this army to the public was not much; but they that were conveyed away by stealth were very many: and all Sicily was filled with them, because they were not taken as those with Demosthenes were, upon terms of capitulation. Besides, a great part of these were slain; for the slaughter at this time was exceeding great, none greater in all the Sicilian war. They were also not a few that died in those other assaults in their march. Nevertheless many also escaped, some then presently, and some by running away after servitude, the rendezvous of whom was Catana †.

"The Syracusans and their confederates being come together, returned with their prisoners, all they could get, and with the spoil, into the city. As for all the other prisoners of the Athenians and their confederates, they put themselves into the quarries, as the safest custody. But Nicias and Demosthenes they killed against Gylippus's will. For Gylippus thought the victory would be very honourable, if, over and above all his other success, he could carry home both the generals of the enemy to Lacedæmon. And it fell out that the one of them, Demosthenes, was their greatest enemy, for the things he had done in the island ‡, and at Pylus; and the other, upon the same occasion, their greatest friend. For Nicias

* That is, such as the captors concealed, to make slaves of them for their own private advantage.

† A minute account of the transactions of the siege, of the geography of the neighbourhood of Syracuse, and the portion of country traversed by the Athenians, will be found at the end of the third volume of Arnold's Thucydides.

‡ Sphacteria.

had earnestly laboured to have those prisoners which were taken in the island, to be set at liberty by persuading the Athenians to the peace. For which cause the Lacedæmonians were inclined to love him; and it was principally in confidence of that, that he surrendered himself to Gylippus. But certain Syracusans (as it is reported), some of them for fear (because they had been tampering with him), lest being examined upon this matter, he should disclose something to disturb their present enjoyment; and others (especially the Corinthians) fearing he might get away by corruption of one or other (being wealthy), and work them some mischief afresh, having persuaded their confederates to the same, killed him. For these, or for causes near unto these, was he put to death; being the man that, of all the Grecians of my time, had least deserved to be brought to so great a degree of misery, on account of his regular observance and respect towards the gods.

"As for those in the quarries, the Syracusans handled them at first but ungently; for in this hollow place, first the sun and suffocating air (being without roof), annoyed them one way; and on the other side, the nights coming upon that heat, autumnal and cold, put them (by reason of the alteration) into strange diseases. Especially because for want of room they did all things in one and the same place, and the carcases of such as died of their wounds, or vicissitudes of weather, or the like, lay there in heaps. Also the smell was intolerable, besides that they were afflicted with hunger and thirst. For for eight months together they allowed them no more but to every man a cotyle* of water by the day, and two cotyles of corn: and whatsoever misery is probable that men in such a place may suffer, they suffered. Some seventy days they lived thus

* A small measure about half a pint.

thronged. Afterwards retaining the Athenians, and such Sicilians and Italians as were of the army with them, they sold the rest. How many were taken in all, it is hard to say exactly; but they were seven thousand * at the fewest. And this, in my opinion, was the greatest action that happened in all this war, or at all, that we have heard of among the Grecians, being to the victors most glorious, and most calamitous to the vanquished. For being wholly overcome in every kind, and receiving small loss in nothing, their army and fleet, and all that ever they had, perished (as they used to say) with an universal destruction. Few of many returned home. And thus passed the business concerning Sicily."

A pleasing anecdote, related by Plutarch, relieves in part the fate of these unhappy men. Many Athenians, who fell into the hands of private masters, found the means of procuring kinder treatment by recitations of the masterpieces of literature, with which the minds even of the poorest Athenians were usually stored; especially the tragedies of Euripides, the favourite dramatic poet of the Sicilian Greeks. Many are said to have visited him on their return to Attica, to own themselves indebted to him for liberty, granted as a recompense for communicating what they recollected of his works. This is strong testimony to the scarcity of manuscripts, and the consequent value of knowledge to its possessor. The same cause enabled these captive Athenians to purchase freedom, and the philosophers and sophists to reap such golden harvests from their lectures; literature was entirely dependent upon oral communication.

Forty thousand men, of whom a large proportion were veteran soldiers of the second military power in

* Free men, that is.

Greece, ought to have made a better defence. But they were dispirited, and commanded by a general unequal to the emergency. Nicias possessed many admirable qualities; respect for the gods, honesty, personal courage, and dignity of character when not confronted with an Athenian assembly; and they shone perhaps more brightly in the concluding than in any other scene of his life; but his courage was of the passive rather than the active sort, and he did not possess the power of rapid observation and decision which mark the accomplished general, and are most especially required to extricate an army from a false position. So far from pursuing the plan laid down in his speech, the first day's retreat did not exceed five miles; the next was less than three; and when, after eight days of marching and fighting, the Athenian army surrendered, it was not twenty miles distant from Syracuse. Want of promptitude in the first instance suffered the Syracusans to preoccupy the passes. How far the obstacles which Nicias had then to surmount may justify his tardiness it is difficult to say. Superior numbers and discipline in the hands of an able general might have done much to counterbalance the advantage of position. The Athenians were placed in difficult circumstances; yet not so difficult as the 10,000 in Persia, or many others who have yet lived to laugh at their enemy.

It is not fair to estimate the character of this expedition by its results, for no foresight could have anticipated that Athens, the mistress of the sea, would be so completely foiled on her own element, as that even the power of return should be denied to her defeated army. But without judging things by their events, a method which renders criticism of the past comparatively easy, there are ample grounds to prove the impolicy of entering upon such a scheme of conquest at such a time. The Athenians were

already engaged in a war fully commensurate with their strength, and which their utmost exertions had been unable to bring to a happy close. Their wealth and power were derived chiefly from colonies and subject cities, of which several were in open revolt, and all more or less disaffected. Eubœa itself, the most important, and from its situation the most easily controlled, of these dependencies, was so discontented, that to prevent its defection was the first care of the administration, as soon as news arrived of the Sicilian defeat. It was under these circumstances that they undertook a war, characterized by Thucydides as not much less than that against the Peloponnesians *, and having for its object the conquest † of an island about nine times as large as Attica, and inhabited not by a rude or effeminate population, but by rich and powerful cities of their own countrymen. The enterprise, hazardous in itself, was rendered more so by the length of the voyage, according to the methods of navigation then in use, which prevented succour being sent, or remedy applied to any sudden reverse; and on this hazardous service, at this critical time, a body of troops was sent, not too large for its object, but far larger than the state could afford to lose. That their destruction was believed to be a deathblow is evident from Thucydides. "Every thing from every place grieved them, and fear and astonishment, the greatest that ever they were in, beset them round. For they were not only grieved for the loss, which both every man in particular and the whole city sustained, of so many men-

* Thucyd. vi. 1.

† "And though it were thus great, yet the Athenians longed very much to send an army against it out of a desire to bring it all unto subjection (which was the true motive), but as having withal this fair pretext of aiding their kinsmen and new confederates." vi. 6.

at-arms, horsemen, and serviceable men, the like whereof they saw was not left; but seeing they had neither galleys enough in their haven, nor money in their treasury, nor able seamen* in their galleys, were even desperate at that present of their safety, and thought the enemy out of Sicily would come forthwith with their fleet into Piræus (especially after vanquishing of so great a navy), and that the enemy here would surely now, with double preparation in every kind, press them to the utmost both by sea and land, and be aided therein by their revolting confederates†." Thanks to their own activity and to the supineness of their enemy, this loss did not immediately prove fatal; but the result of the war would probably have been very different, had the lives and treasure wasted in Sicily been devoted for their country in some better chosen cause.

"Nick, young Nick, the deacon used to say to me (his name was Nicol as well as mine; sae folk ca'd us in their daffin', young Nick and auld Nick), Nick, said he, never put your arm out further than you can easily draw it back again." Baillie Jarvie's maxim is as applicable to political affairs as to commercial, and good in both. He whose fortune is already desperate may stake all on one cast: for the prosperous and powerful to do so is madness. Had Napoleon's ambition not blinded him to this simple rule of caution he might have died on the imperial throne: he stretched his arm too far when he marched to Moscow. No two persons could be more unlike than Napoleon and Nicias; and it is worth observing, that tempers diametrically opposite led these two generals into the same error. Both tempted their fortune after the hour of success was past, and, when active measures could no longer be pursued, remained in idleness, from mere want of resolution to confess a failure by

* ὑπηρεσίας.—See above. † Thucyd. viii. 1.

their actions: Nicias, for want of moral courage to face an unreasonable master, whose mortification was not likely to be anywise lessened by being reminded that the defeated general had always disapproved of his commission; Napoleon, from his sensitive pride, which clung to any pretence, however thin, which could conceal from himself, if not from others, that the victor of a hundred battles was at length foiled. The celebrated campaign of 1812 bears indeed a nearer resemblance to the Sicilian than to the Scythian war, and on that account might better have been reserved for this place. But there is one portion of it still unnoticed, which displays in their perfection those military qualities, the want of which proved fatal to Nicias and the Athenian army.

We allude to the remarkable skill, courage, and good fortune with which Marshal Ney extricated himself from circumstances, apparently as hopeless as any that men could be placed in. It has already been stated that the French army on quitting Smolensk was distributed into four divisions, which marched on different days *. Ney commanded the last. The Russian army lay in strength between that city and Orcza, but their opposition was undecided, and the three first divisions forced their way past, though with severe losses. When he had only the rear guard to deal with, Kutusoff came to a resolution which, if adopted in the first instance, might have ended at once the campaign and the reign of Napoleon, and took post across the road, so as to bar all passage, except such as should be cut through the centre of his army. On the second afternoon after he left Smolensk, Ney came in view of the Russians. They consisted of 80,000 men, with a powerful artillery. The two armies were posted on opposite sides of a deep ravine, which at this point

* See vol. i. p. 248.

intersected the plain. Kutusoff sent an officer to summon Ney to surrender, stating the amount of his force, and offering permission to send one of his officers to verify his representations by inspection. While the envoy was still speaking, forty guns opened their fire upon the French. Ney exclaimed in anger, "A marshal never surrenders; neither do men treat under fire. You are my prisoner." The artillery redoubled their thunder; the hills, before cold and silent, resembled volcanoes in eruption, and then, said the French soldiers, enthusiastic in praise of their favourite leader, this man of fire seemed to feel in his true element.

His whole force consisted of only 5000 men and six guns. Opposed were 80,000, well armed and well fed, and strong in cavalry and artillery. The French vanguard of 1500 men passed along the road into the ravine, and dashed gallantly up the opposite side; but the front line of the Russians met them at the top, and at once shattered their feeble column. Ney rallied them, and caused them to be formed in reserve, while he led on in person the main body of 3000 men. He made no speeches; he advanced at their head, which is worth all the oratorical flourishes in the world. Meanwhile 400 Illyrians had been detached to take the enemy in flank. The impetuosity of his charge broke and scattered the first opposing line, and without stop or hesitation he advanced upon the second; but ere they reached it, a tempest of cannon and musket-balls whistled through the column: it staggered, broke, and retreated.

Convinced that it was impossible to force his way, he returned to his former position on the other side of the ravine, drew up what remained of his troops, and awaited the attack. Russian inactivity (we cannot call it caution) saved him, as it had saved those who

went before. A single corps might have forced Ney's position against the weak body who now defended it; but the enemy contented himself with maintaining a murderous cannonade, to which the six guns feebly replied. Still the soldiers, though falling thickly, remained constant at their posts, deriving comfort and confidence from the tranquillity of their chief.

At nightfall Ney gave orders to retreat towards Smolensk. All who heard it were struck with amazement. The Emperor, and their comrades, and France, lay in front: he proposed to turn back into a country which they had too much reason to detest and fly. Even the aide-de-camp to whom the command was issued stood as if he could hardly believe his ears, until it was repeated in a brief and decided tone. They marched backwards for an hour, and then stopped; and the Marshal, who had remained in the rear, rejoined them. Their situation may be thus summed up. Between them and the Emperor lay an army, which they had tried in vain to force. Guides they had none: on the left the country was open, but there was little chance of turning unobserved the flank of an enemy, furnished with a numerous and active cavalry; besides that the time consumed in such an operation would have left little hope of ever rejoining the main body of the French. On the right the liberty of movement was curtailed by the Dnieper, which flowed in that direction; its precise situation and the possibility of crossing it being unknown. Ney's plan was already conceived. He descended into a ravine, and caused the snow to be cleared away until the course of a rivulet was exposed. "This," he said, "must be one of the feeders of the Dnieper. It will conduct us to the river, and on the further bank of that river lies our safety." They followed it as their guide, and about eight o'clock in the evening arrived upon the bank of the

Dnieper. Their joy was complete on seeing the river frozen over. Above and below it was still open, but just at the spot where they reached it a sharp bend in its course had stopped the floating ice, which the frost had connected into a continuous though a slight bridge. An officer volunteered to try its strength. He reached the opposite bank, and returned. "It would bear the men," he said, "and some few horses. But a thaw was commencing, and there was no time to be lost." The fatigue and difficulty of a nocturnal march had scattered the troops, as well as the disorganized band of stragglers which attended on them; and Ney, though pressed to cross at once, resolved to give three hours' time for rallying. This interval of repose, even at so critical a moment, he spent, wrapped in his cloak, in deep and placid sleep upon the river bank.

Towards midnight they began to pass. Those who first tried the ice warned their companions that it bent under them, and sunk so low that they were up to their knees in water. The deep, threatening sound of cracks was heard on all sides, and those who still remained on the bank hesitated to trust themselves to so frail a support. Ney ordered them to pass one by one. Much precaution was necessary, for large chasms had opened, doubly concealed by the darkness of night, and by the general covering of water. Men hesitated, but they were driven on by the impatient cries of those who remained on the bank, still ignorant of the dangers of the passage, and goaded by the constant fear of the enemy's approach.

The carriages and cannon attendant on the army were of necessity left behind, with those of the wounded who were unable to make their way across. The chief of the hospital department tried the experiment of sending some waggon-loads of sick and wounded men across the ice. A scream of agony

was heard when they had reached the middle of the stream, succeeded by a deep silence. The ice had given way, and all perished, except one officer, severely wounded, who supported himself upon a sheet of ice, and crawling from one piece to another reached the bank.

Ney had now placed the river between himself and the Russian army by a stroke of promptitude and courage rarely equalled. But his situation was far from enviable. He was in a desert of forests, without roads and without guides, two days' march from Orcza, where he expected to meet Napoleon. As the troops advanced, the foremost men observed a beaten way; but there was little comfort to be derived from this, for they distinguished the marks of artillery and horses proceeding in the same direction as themselves. Ney as usual took the lion's counsel, and followed those menacing tracks to a village, which he surrounded and assaulted, in which there were 100 cossacks, who were roused from their sleep only to find themselves prisoners. Here the French found comforts of which they had known little since their departure from Moscow; food, clothes, comfortable quarters, and rest. What a blessed relief to men, who within the last twelve hours had been hopeless of escape from death in battle, and then exposed to scarce less imminent danger of perishing in a half-frozen river!

From hence it was two days' march to Orcza, where Ney arrived on November 20, his followers being reduced to 1500 men. He had baulked the Russian regular troops; but he found Platoff and his cossacks upon the right bank of the Dnieper, and suffered severely from their marauding warfare. Napoleon had given him up for lost; when he heard that he had rejoined the army he leaped for joy, as he exclaimed, "Then I have saved my eagles! I have

200,000,000 in the Tuilleries: I would have given them all, rather than lose such a man*!"

An anecdote of similar resolution and readiness, curious on account of the nature of the danger to be avoided, is told by the Florentine historians of the fourteenth century. At that time Italian warfare was chiefly carried on by hired soldiers, men usually of profligate lives and broken fortunes, unfitted by the licence of a camp for peaceful industry, or driven to forsake it by the insecurity of property in those calamitous times, when he who sowed the seed had no assurance that he should reap the harvest. The long wars between France and England under Edward III. swelled the numbers of these men to a fearful extent; and the reader who will consult Froissart concerning the state of France at this period, will there find a fearful picture of the misrule and misery produced by men of this description, who when there was no regular war to occupy their swords, formed themselves into troops, took possession by force or fraud of some castle or stronghold, and lived by levying contributions on the peasantry, and plundering all persons who came in their way. Such spirits readily flocked round the banner of any soldier of repute who offered a price for their services; nor were men of birth and reputation wanting to lead them into the foreign market, who readily overlooked the character of their followers in consideration of the wealth and consequence to be derived from their support. Among the most distinguished, and also the most honourable of this class, was an Englishman, named Sir John Hawkwood, long practised in the Italian wars, and at the time we speak of, in the service of Florence. In the year 1391, that city being at war with the Duke of Milan, planned a double invasion of his dominions. The

* Segur, Gourgaud, Napoleon in Russia.

Count d'Armagnac, a French nobleman of high military renown, was hired to invade Milan from the west, while on the east Hawkwood advanced from Vicenza, through Verona and Brescia. The two armies were intended to unite and lay siege to Milan; but the scheme was deranged by the defeat and total destruction of the Count d'Armagnac, and Hawkwood, who, before he heard that news, had advanced within fifteen miles of the city, on a sudden found himself in imminent danger.

On looking at a map, the reader will observe that all the country between the Alps and Po is intersected by numerous rivers; which, like those of Holland, for the most part flow at a higher level than the neighbouring plains, and are kept within their course by lofty dikes. Hawkwood had crossed the Adige, Mincio, and Oglio; and consequently when Jacopo del Verme, the Milanese general, marched against him at the head of a superior force elated with victory, his situation became very uncomfortable. To give battle was hazardous, for a defeat with three large rivers in his rear would have been utter destruction; and it was scarcely less dangerous to attempt to cross them, without having first gained some advantages, and struck terror into the enemy. In this dilemma he remained quiet for a time, retained his soldiers strictly within the camp, without regarding the insults and provocations of the enemy, until this apparent timidity led them into an imprudent bravado, which gave him an opportunity of attacking to advantage and routing them with considerable slaughter.

He judged rightly that this blow would keep his adversary quiet for a little while, and immediately broke up his camp and crossed the Oglio without hinderance; the enemy following, but being too late, or too much cowed to molest him. He passed the

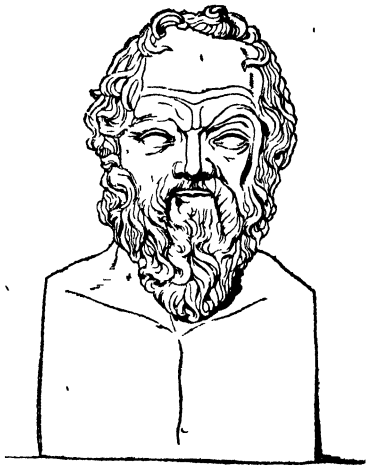
Mincio also, and was then in a plain, enclosed by the dikes of the Po, Mincio, and Adige, and lying below the level of those rivers. The last was still to be crossed; and it presented greater difficulties than the Oglio and Mincio, both on account of the greater volume and velocity of its stream, and because the enemy had pre-occupied and fortified its dikes. Hawkwood was encamped on a small eminence in the plain,—we may suppose rather at a loss how to prosecute his retreat,—when suddenly the whole of the low country was flooded. They had cut the dikes of the Adige, in hope of drowning or starving the invader into submission. The inundation gained ground every hour, and threatened the camp itself. As far as the eye could reach all was water. Provisions began to fail; and Del Verme, who with his troops shut up the only road to escape, sent Hawkwood the enigmatical present of a fox in a cage. The Englishman received the gift, and requested the messenger to carry back word that the fox seemed nothing dismayed, and probably knew very well by what door he should get out of his cage.

"It is generally confessed," says Poggio, "that no other captain, except Hawkwood, whose sayings and doings deserve to be commemorated among the subtleties of ancient generals and orators, could have overcome the difficulties and dangers in which the Florentine army was now involved." It is not every one assuredly that would have nerve to adopt the measure which he adopted. In the middle of the night he abandoned his camp, trusting himself and his army boldly to the inundated plain, and shaped his course parallel to the dikes of the Adige. He advanced all the next day, and part of the succeeding night, through water up to the horses' bellies; his progress delayed by the deep mud, and by numerous trenches which intersected the fields; and which,

beneath the universal covering of water, could no longer be distinguished from the solid ground. In this manner he traversed all the valley of Verona; at length, opposite to Castel Baldo, he crossed the dry bed of the Adige, there exhausted of its waters, and found repose and refreshment for his exhausted army within the Paduan frontier. The weaker horses, and a large part of the infantry, perished in this march by suffocation, fatigue, and cold; some saved themselves by clinging to the horses' tails. But the bulk of the army was saved, and Jacopo del Verme took care not to tempt the waters by engaging in so hazardous a pursuit*.

* Sismondi, Hist. Rep. Ital. Poggio, Bracciolini, Hist. Florent.

Chapter VIII.



Bust of Socrates.

History and character of Socrates—Account of his death—Prosecution of John Huss and Jerome of Prague—Attempt to re-establish piety in Scotland—Brown—Guthrie—Reformation in England—Account of Rowland Taylor.

By strictly adhering to our intention of bringing down Greek history to the close of the Peloponnesian war, we should exclude from this volume an event which in all ages has commanded an unusual sympathy, the execution of the philosopher Socrates on the false charge of blaspheming the recognized divinities, and corrupting the young citizens of his country. But as the life and actions of this remarkable man belong almost entirely to the period included in this volume, though his death did not occur until the year B. C.

399, five years after the capture of Athens, it seems proper to give some account of him here.

Socrates was the son of Sophroniscus, a sculptor, and himself gained a livelihood by working at his father's profession. But he devoted himself at an early age to the study of philosophy, and by the extreme simplicity and frugality of his habits was enabled to give up a very large portion of his time to that pursuit. In youth he diligently sought instruction, as far as his means permitted, from the best teachers of those branches of education which were in repute. How soon he gained notoriety as a public teacher himself, is not determined: but he must have been known before the Clouds of Aristophanes, in which he is a leading character, was acted, B. C. 423. His conduct, however, was very different from that of the professed teachers for pay, who, at the time of which we speak, were numerous, and if successful, wealthy and influential. He gave no regular lectures in stated periods and places, he required no money from those who attended upon him, and indeed accepted no reward, either from those who heard him in public, or those with whom he familiarly associated: private instruction, as a paid teacher, he refused to give, though his conversation was habitually directed to the objects of his public teaching. According to Xenophon*, he was always in public; in the morning he was found in frequented walks, or in the *gymnasia*, or places of public exercise; he visited the agora, whenever it was likely to be fullest; he was seen in the evening, wherever he was likely to meet with the greatest number of persons. Instead of saying that he gave no regular lectures, it would be more correct to say that he never lectured at all: his usual course was to entrap the person upon whom he chose to exercise his dialectic powers, into a conversation, in its outset probably of the most common-

* Memorabilia, book i. chap. 1, p. 10.

place and unalarming description, and then, by a series of skilfully contrived questions, to lead him, if a pretender to knowledge, to expose his presumption, and ignorance of what he professed to know; or he would take a person confessedly ignorant of the things to be discussed, and lead him step by step in a succession of questions, until he obtained out of the respondent's mouth the result at which he, the interrogator, wished to arrive.

It would be out of place to enter here upon the discussion of the abstruse question, how far and in what respects Socrates ought to be considered as the founder of a new school of philosophy*. Indeed to ascertain exactly what he did teach, is not now possible. Our knowledge of him is derived almost exclusively from two of his pupils, Plato and Xenophon; for all his instructions were oral, he wrote nothing. Now the memoirs (Memorabilia) of Xenophon exhibit "not the whole character of Socrates, but only that part of it which belonged to the sphere of the affections and of social life, and which bore upon the charges brought against him†." In respect of the more extensive and abstruse writings of Plato, it is to be said, that though we may be satisfied that his Socrates, as a whole, is a faithful portrait, yet it is hardly possible to determine exactly what belongs to the master, and what has been deduced from, and engrafted on the doctrines of the master by the scholar. For what Plato teaches, he teaches under the name of Socrates: he advances nothing as his own, and on his own authority‡. It is easy however, and

* Those readers who wish to inquire into it, will find a learned and able paper on this subject by Schleiermacher, in the Berlin Transactions, translated in the Philological Museum, vol. ii. No. 6, "On the worth of Socrates as a philosopher."

† Ibid., p. 544.

‡ The earliest extant notice of this curious question is contained in the recently discovered Republic of Cicero, edited by Maii, lib. i. c. 10. As this treatise is not contained in the general editions

sufficient for our present purpose, to state the grounds upon which Socrates has commanded the undying love and admiration, not of the learned only, but of all good men. There is a well known passage of Cicero, which says, "that Socrates first drew down philosophy from heaven, and settled it in cities, and even introduced it into our homes, and made it inquire of life, and morals, and good and bad things*." It is to be understood from this, not that Socrates was the first moral teacher, but that whereas earlier philosophers had directed their attention chiefly to physical and theological questions of the most unfathomable kind, such as the nature, form, and essence of divinity, the nature of matter, the origin and constitution of the universe, &c.; his instructions, on the contrary, were chiefly directed towards explaining the duties of life, and the principles on which the conduct of men in their social relations ought to be regulated. Nor is it impossible that Cicero's phrase may have been suggested, in some degree, by the novel style of language and illustration which Socrates used, of which we shall presently speak more at length. To physical studies, Socrates, like his predecessors, had once been deeply addicted. Failing to arrive at any certain conclusions, he ceased to apply himself to such pursuits, and bent his own

of the philosopher, we shall translate it:—"You have heard, Tubero, that after the death of Socrates, Plato, to acquire knowledge, travelled first to Egypt, then to Sicily and Italy, that he might learn the discoveries of Pythagoras; and that he had much intercourse with Archytas of Tarentum and Timæus the Locrian, and got possession of the Commentaries of Philolaus; and that, as the name of Pythagoras was then in much credit in those parts, he devoted himself to men of the Pythagorean school and to those studies. Therefore since he loved Socrates singly, and wished to refer every thing to him, he blended the Socratic humour and subtlety of language with the obscurity of Pythagoras and that air of gravity given by so many kinds of learning."

* Tusc. Quæst. v. 4.

and his pupils' attention to questions more nearly connected with our social and moral duties; holding, probably, not that these abstruse inquiries were pernicious, or unworthy the attention of a philosopher, but that they ought to be postponed until the understanding was enlightened upon things bearing directly upon the duties and business of life*. Against those who doubted or denied the existence of a God, he maintained most ably that existence, and the incorporeal and immortal nature of the soul. In his disputes with the sophists† and sceptics, he availed himself of a readiness and dexterity in argument superior to their own; and drawing them by an artful series of questions into inconsistencies and absurdities, exposed at once their arrogance, and the falseness of their views. He stated and enforced a system of morality and religion purer and loftier than that of the Pythagoreans (the purest sect of antecedent philosophers); but unlike them he was accessible to all, clear in all his statements, as far as possible, and ready to explain what was not understood. Ever earnest in recommending temperance, benevolence, piety, justice, and showing that man's happiness and dignity are determined by his mind and not his fortunes, by virtue and wisdom, not by wealth and rank, his own life was the best example of his precepts. His honesty as a public functionary, we have seen tested in the prosecution of the Athenian generals after the battle of Arginusæ: his private conduct was no less exemplary. Barefooted and poorly clad, he associated with the rich and gay as with the needy, in the same spirit of cheerful goodwill: his advice and instructions were given to all without fee or reward, for his spirit was

* Schleiermacher, as above. The rest of this paragraph is taken, with some trivial alterations, from the History of Greece.

† For an account of this class of men, see pages 14, 20.

rigidly independent, and if he possessed little, he wanted less.

Such is a sketch of Socrates, as he is commonly drawn in history, and known to those who are not read in the Greek language. We have endeavoured not to exaggerate his merits; nor must it be attributed to a desire to detract from them, if we proceed to describe the social Socrates in a light which may surprise, and probably startle, many*. The portrait of the philosopher is indeed too generally known to permit them to ascribe to him that elevated cast of countenance, which we associate in our minds with a character such as that just drawn: but they have most likely regarded him as sedate, dignified, and decorous in his manners and conduct. The picture, as we have it from his contemporaries, does not exactly accord with such a notion. A full conviction that what is good is in its nature unalterable, and therefore cannot consist in any thing perishable, had led him to esteem what are commonly thought the advantages of life, such as health, riches, pleasure, power, unfit to be the chief objects of our desires, or motives of our actions; and he showed this in his own person, by an extreme neglect of the usual luxuries, and even comforts of life. And he was fortunate, inasmuch as his self-denying principles were backed by a robust constitution; so that he was enabled, when serving as a soldier at the siege of Potidæa, to bear an unusual severity of cold with an indifference, which his fellow-soldiers attributed to the desire of displaying his own hardihood at their expense. He went barefoot, even in winter; he used

*Mr. Cumberland, in the Observer, has made a violent attack on the moral character of Socrates. Mr. Mitchell has taken a more moderate and candid tone in the 'Preliminary Discourse' to his translation of Aristophanes. We have to acknowledge ourselves indebted to his extensive acquaintance with the Socratic writings, for references to several valuable and characteristic passages.

the same clothing, winter and summer; he eschewed the favourite Athenian luxury of unguents, and seldom indulged in that other favourite luxury, the bath.

The same eccentricity displayed itself in other parts of his conduct. While serving in the camp before Potidæa, he is said to have stood motionless for a day, from sunrise to sunrise, engaged in meditation. The peculiarity of his personal appearance* was well

* This is described by Xenophon in his Banquet, in a passage which we must regard as his genuine recollection of a similar pleasantry on the part of Socrates. Had it been found in Plato, this might have been doubtful, but it is not Xenophon's habit to introduce his master in this ludicrous manner. At a drinking party in the house of Callias, Socrates is introduced contesting the point of beauty with Critobulus. To prove his own superiority, he asks, "whether beauty resides in man only, or in other things."

Critobulus. I think, by Jupiter, that it exists in a horse also, and an ox, and many inanimate things: as for instance, I know of a handsome shield, or sword, or spear.

Socrates. And how is it possible, that these things, being all unlike each other, should all be handsome?

Critob. If things are well fitted for the purposes for which we have them, or are well constituted by nature for useful ends, even these things are handsome[1].

Socr. Do you know then for what you want eyes?

Critob. Plainly, to see.

Socr. On this ground, then, my eyes would be handsomer than yours.

Critob. How so?

Socr. Because yours see straight forward only; but mine, which project, can see to the side also.

Critob. You say then that a crab is the best eyed of animals?

[1] There is a sort of ambiguity in the Greek word καλὸς, which is applicable to any sort of excellence, whether beauty of form, or aptness to a purpose; so that neither handsome, nor any English single word which occurs to us, exactly expresses its whole meaning. Familiarly indeed we do use the term beautiful much in the same way; and speak of a beautiful woman, and a beautiful cricket-bat, without meaning that there is any more similarity between them, either of form or purpose, than Critobulus, when he applies the term καλὸς equally to a man, an ox, or a shield.

qualified to attract notice, and set off his singular habits: and some of his habits seem better suited to his personal appearance than to his real character; for in his conversation (as it is reported by Plato), he assumed a licence which has given birth to imputations against him, at variance with the purity of morals which he inculcated, and which the concurrent testimony of his followers and biographers asserts that he practised. His favourite associates were the young, among whom he was most likely to gain converts to his own opinions, and accordingly he mixed without scruple in their festivities, and even in their intemperance; though wine was never seen to affect him, and that not from abstinence in his potations. The banquet of Plato, in which Socrates, Alcibiades, Aristophanes, and others are the speakers, ends with a description of the festivities being broken up late at night, by the irruption of a party of drunken revellers, "after which things were no longer carried on regularly, but every body was compelled to drink a great quantity of wine. On

Socr. By all means: since it has eyes the best constituted for that which is the purpose of eyes.

Critob. Granted. But of our noses, which is handsomest, mine or yours?

Socr. I indeed think mine the handsomest, if the gods in truth made noses for us to smell with: for your nostrils point downwards to the ground, while mine are spread open, so as to collect smells from all quarters.

Critob. But how can a pug nose be handsomer than a straight one?

Socr. Because it constitutes no barrier, but lets the eyes look straight, where they choose: but a high nose, as if out of insolence, sets a wall between the eyes.

Critob. For the mouth, I give up: for if mouths were made to bite with, you can take a much bigger mouthful than I.

Socr. And do you consider it no proof that I am handsomer than you, that the Naiads, who are goddesses, have for children Sileni, who are more like me than you?

Critob. I have nothing to say in reply: but let the votes be taken, that I may know as soon as possible what penalty I incur.

Verdict for Critobulus.

this (said Aristodemus the relater) several of the party went away, but he himself fell asleep, and slept very abundantly, for the nights were then long. But on awaking towards day-break, the cocks then crowing, he saw that the other guests were either gone or asleep, and that Agathon, Socrates, and Aristophanes were the only persons awake, and were drinking to the right hand out of a great bowl. Now Socrates was lecturing them: and the rest of his discourse, Aristodemus said he did not remember, for being asleep, he had not been present at the beginning. But the sum of it was, that Socrates compelled them to confess that it was the province of the same man to know how to compose comedy and tragedy, and that he who was by art a tragic poet was a comic poet also. And having been forced to assent to these things, and that without very clearly understanding them, Aristodemus said they fell asleep; and first Aristophanes went to sleep, and then as the day broke, Agathon. And Socrates, having sent them to sleep, got up and departed; and going to the Lyceum, washed himself, as at other times, and spent the whole day there, and so in the evening went home to rest*."

This is not exactly the sort of scene in which the great teacher of moral philosophy would be expected to figure; but according to the best notions we can form it is a characteristic one, whether drawn literally from the life, or freely coloured by Plato, who it may be safely concluded would not have invented such manners for a master whom he loved and venerated. This freedom of speech and life, combined with his personal peculiarities, and uncouth and eccentric habits, led Alcibiades to compare him to the Sileni, in the workshops of statuaries, rude figures which, on being opened, showed that

* Convivium: end.

they contained inside precious images of the gods*. Such a man lay open to a large share of ridicule, and in the earlier part of his vocation as a public instructor, a plentiful share of ridicule was bestowed on him by Aristophanes in his celebrated comedy of the Clouds. At the same time he was not a person to be rashly attacked; and those who were most hostile to him, and to whom he was most hostile, especially the sophists, were for the most part roughly handled, when they ventured to engage with him in a contest of wits. Few of his followers seem to have been really attached to him; but those, to their honour and his, remained faithful and attached both to his person and memory in no common degree. But many frequented his society for a time with eagerness, to enjoy his subtlety of discourse, to be amused by the eminent discomfiture which he usually inflicted on those who ventured publicly to oppose him, and to profit by the novel style of reasoning introduced by him, which, if a powerful instrument of truth when used honestly, was not less adapted, when used skilfully and unscrupulously, to throw all the notions of a common-place understanding into inextricable confusion. It was probably the latter motive which induced many men eminent in after-life to rank themselves, as we are told, among his pupils; especially three who are recorded to have frequented his society, Alcibiades, Theramenes, and Critias; for we can hardly suppose, from their known characters, that these men, none of them of fair political fame, however attracted by the talents, and studious to derive intellectual benefit from the society of Socrates, were in any degree influenced by the true philosophy, which under this singular coat of eccentricity he sought to recommend. And as Socrates does not seem to have been beloved *in general*, even by those

* Convivium, § xxxix. part ii. vol. ii. p. 452., ed., Bekker.

who sought his company, so among the citizens at large he obtained none of that gratitude, which a life devoted without reward to the public service should seem likely to inspire, except that those who volunteer their services notoriously get small thanks for their pains; especially when those services are directed to enlighten ignorance, or remove prejudice. Nor were his habits calculated to conciliate favour. His self-denial and frugality of life seemed like a tacit reproach to the idle and luxurious, numerous every where, and more than commonly numerous at Athens. Again, the dedication of his life to gratuitous teaching, as he conducted it, was one of the most unpopular things about him. If he had given lectures at stated periods to those who chose to hear him, he might have been endured, but his life seems to have been a never-ending lecture, which is wearisome to all people. Even at the banquet he would interrupt the song and dance, the favourite amusements of the Athenians *, in favour of the argumentative conversations which he loved above all things: and whether at the banquet or elsewhere, stranger or acquaintance, every person who came across him was liable to be made subject to his moral dissecting knife, in a way which few would very patiently submit to. "You seem to me, O Lysimachus," says Nicias, in Plato's Laches, "not to be aware that whosoever may be closely connected with Socrates in argument, as if by birth, and may be attracted to him in disputation, is compelled, though the conversation may begin concerning something quite different, not to leave off, being

* Xen. Convi. c. 3. So in the Protagoras of Plato, part i. chap. 92, vol. ii. p. 221, ed., Bekker. "Such meetings as these, when they occupy men such as most of us here profess to be, require no stranger's voice, and no poets, whom it is impossible to question about the meaning of what they relate .... but such men seek the company of each other for their own sakes, giving and making trial of each other in their conversation."

led round and round by him in discourse, before he falls into giving an account of himself, both how he now lives, and how he has lived in past time: and that when he is thus engaged, Socrates will not let him go before he has scrutinized all these things well and fairly. Now I am used to him, and know that I must go through all this at his hands; and that I shall do so on this occasion. For I rejoice, O Lysimachus, in the company of this man, and think it no bad thing to be reminded of what we have done, or are doing, amiss."*

Not less remarkable than his appearance, and well suited to it, was the language in which these familiar inquiries of Socrates were usually clothed. Constant intercourse with all classes, high and low, had given him a store of familiar illustrations, often more forcible than elegant, derived from the habits and experience of artificers, whose peculiar terms of art he loved to introduce in a style which must have contrasted oddly with the pompous language of the sophists. Alcibiades thus characterizes his style in the banquet of Plato:—"A man so unlike all others as Socrates, both for himself, and for his manner of conversation, one could hardly find by inquiry, either of those now living, nor of old times: unless one were to liken him, as I have said, to no man indeed, but to the Silenuses and Satyrs, both him and his speech. And in truth, I omitted this in what I said before, that his speech is very like to the figures of Silenus when opened. For if a person should wish to hear the speeches of Socrates, they would appear at first quite ridiculous; in such terms and words are they clothed outwardly, as if it were in the hide of a saucy satyr. For he talks of asses and their burdens, and of braziers, and leather-cutters, and tanners, and always seems to say the same things through the same

* Plat. Laches, § 14, part i. vol. i. p. 270, ed., Bekker.

medium; so that an unwise or unexperienced man would laugh at his words. But he who sees them open, and gets at their inside, will find, first, that they alone of all discourses, have meaning within them; then that they are most divine, and contain most images of virtue in themselves; and reach to the greatest extent, or rather to everything, which he who wishes to be good and honourable ought to regard*." Now the bulk of those who came into contact with Socrates were unwise or inexperienced, therefore they laughed at him, as Alcibiades said they would; but it is quite as probable that a large portion, especially of those who were entrapped into the sort of cross-examination above described, became angry, or to use a familiar expression, were bored. We may fairly conjecture that Socrates had the reputation of being the greatest bore of his day†; and this in the laughter-loving town of Athens, would

* Convivium, § 44, part ii. vol. ii. p. 465, ed., Bekker.

† It would seem to be, in reference to this sort of feeling, that Plato puts these words into the mouth of Socrates, after sentence passed on him, near the end of the Apology: "For now you have done this, thinking that you should be liberated from the necessity of giving an account of your life;" a necessity which, to take Socrates' own account of his conduct, they may have been very glad to be liberated from. "For if you should put me to death, you will not easily find such another (though the comparison is ridiculous) whom Divinity has united to this city as to a generous and great horse; but sluggish through his magnitude, and requiring to be excited by some fly. In like manner, Divinity appears to have united me, being somewhat like this, (*i. e.* the fly) to the city, that I might not cease exciting, persuading, and reproving each of you, and every where settling on you all day long."—Apol. ed., Bekk. part i. vol. ii. chap. 18, p. 118. Nobody, however, ever heard that the horse was grateful to the fly. Again, "As to what I before observed, that there is great enmity towards me amongst the vulgar, you may be well assured that it is true. And this it is which will condemn me, if I should be condemned—the hatred of the multitude, and not Melitus or Anytus."—Part *i.* vol. ii. chap. 16, p. 112, ed., Bekk.

have been quite enough to neutralize all notion of gratitude for his persevering attempts to teach his countrymen that they knew little or nothing, instead of everything, as they flattered themselves, or at least everything worth knowing.

Against this man, after he had continued in this singular mode of life at least twenty-four years (for the date of the Clouds informs us, that he had obtained some notoriety before the year B. C. 423, in which that comedy was acted), a criminal accusation was brought, B. C. 399; to the following effect: "Socrates does amiss, not recognizing the gods which the state recognizes, and introducing other new divine natures, and he does amiss in that he corrupts the young." The originator of the charge was an obscure person named Melitus, (Schleiermacher reads Meletus,) a poet, and a bad one; but he was joined by Lycon, an orator*, and Anytus, a man of wealth and consideration in Athens. The cause of that enmity which led to this prosecution is nowhere clearly explained. Mr. Mitford, and Mr.

* Solon appointed a set of officers, ten in number, who were called ῥήτορες, speakers, to argue and explain to the people the merits of public questions, for a certain fee. Their qualifications were to be made the subject of a very close inquiry, according to his laws. Whether in later times the appellation was confined to these recognized speakers, or whether all who were ready to speak and plead causes, as Lysias, Isocrates, &c. were so called, the author has not been able to ascertain to his satisfaction; but he believes the latter to be the case; which is not incompatible with the term still retaining its special meaning, as the title of an officer. Demosthenes calls himself a ῥήτωρ. (De Cor. 301.) In later times they acquired much more importance. Demosthenes was a sort of prime minister. In his time, he says, the orators and generals ran in couples; one to plan and defend; the other to perform (ῥήτωρ ἡγεμὼν, καὶ στρατηγὸς ὑπὸ τούτῳ, De Rep. Ord. 173). In earlier times on the contrary, all the leaders in Athens were men of action, Themistocles, Cimon, Pericles, &c. down to Nicias and Alcibiades, though most of them cultivated eloquence at the same time. Even Cleon thought it necessary to pretend to military renown.

Mitchell, who both entertain a sort of horror for democracy, attribute his condemnation to his known dislike of that form of government. With this statement, as a matter of belief, we have no ground of quarrel; if stated as a matter of fact, we know of no direct authority to support it*. In the apology of Plato, Socrates says, that his three accusers attacked him, "Melitus being my enemy on account of the poets, but Anytus on account of the artificers and politicians, and Lycon on account of the orators†." This passage would rather suggest the notion of private enmity, which is in some degree confirmed by another passage in the apology of Xenophon, where Socrates refers the dislike of Anytus, to a comment made on his style of bringing up his son‡. The causes of hatred ascribed to Melitus and Lycon must be explained,—the one by

* The passage of Ælian (3, 17), quoted both by Mitford and Mitchell, as giving the true solution of the cause of Socrates' death, contains no solution at all of that problem: it merely tells us, what we knew on better authority, that Socrates did not like democracy. Xenophon, Mem. i. c. 2, does more to support this opinion: for he states distinctly, that the avowed dislike of Socrates to the practice of choosing magistrates by lot, the bad character of his pupils Alcibiades and Critias, and his alleged perversion of passages in the poets, to teach his pupils "to be evil-doers, and supporters of tyrannies," were topics insisted on by his accusers in the speech for the prosecution. Nor is it improbable that such topics had their weight with many in the multitude of judges who composed the court, a body too numerous to discriminate and weigh evidence.

† Apol. c. x. part i. vol. ii. p. 103, ed., Bekker.

‡ "Seeing Anytus pass by, he said, 'In truth, this man is self-important, as if he would have done some great and noble action, in having procured my death, because I said that it was not expedient that he should educate his son about hides, seeing that he himself was held in the highest esteem by the commonwealth.' Apol. Xen., § 29. In the Menon of Plato, Anytus is represented as taking great offence with Socrates, for showing that neither Aristides nor Pericles, nor other great statesmen, had been able to educate their sons so as to impart to them their own great abilities (he omits to mention Miltiades, who had a son more

Socrates' avowed contempt for the fictions of poets; the other to his equally avowed abhorrence of that system of instruction practised by the sophists; of which one, and that the most popular branch, was the teaching oratory as an art, by which any person could be enabled to speak on any subject, however ignorant concerning the real merits of it. This desire to remove Socrates existing, whatever its origin, it could not be gratified without finding some plausible ground to go upon. Nothing could be objected to his actions; as a soldier he had distinguished himself for bravery; as a public officer he had shown inflexible integrity, when the infamous vote was passed for putting to death the generals who won the battle of Arginusæ*; and on another occasion, as a citizen, he

eminent than himself, Cimon): a ground of offence which seems odd enough, unless we suppose Anytus to have felt that Socrates was talking at him all the time. Anytus concludes his share in the dialogue with a caution to the philosopher against his freedom of speech, and a hint that in all places it is readier to do harm than good to a man, and of all places, most especially in Athens. "No wonder, Socrates replies, that Anytus is angry, since he thinks that I am abusing men, of whom he esteems himself to be one." (Ed., Bekker, part ii. vol. i. p. 378, § 34.) These men are the πολιτικοὶ (see § 42); so that Anytus was both πολιτικὸς, and (as being a leather-dealer) δημιουργὸς; the two terms used in the passage quoted from the Apology, and in both capacities it would seem that Socrates had offended him. One of the commentators on Plato (Forster, Apol. as above) tells us that the tradesmen of Athens thought that Socrates corrupted the youth of Athens, because he disapproved of educating young men, as Anytus is said to have brought up his son, solely to the lucrative crafts of their fathers, and because he led them into the idle habit of thinking and talking. It may be observed that the character of Anytus did not stand quite clear; since, according to Diodorus, having been sent with a fleet to relieve Pylos, and having failed to do so, as he alleged, from the badness of the weather, he was accused of treachery, "and, being in great danger, bought himself off, being the first of the Athenians, as it appears, who ever bribed a court of justice." Diod. xiii. 64.

* See page 323-4.

had refused, when ordered to apprehend Leon of Salamis*, at the hazard of life, to perform an act contrary to the laws. The real or alleged character of his philosophy and teaching then was the only handle against him. Of this, we have already said enough in the beginning of this chapter, to show that it was difficult to find just ground of complaint against it. But to invent false charges is never difficult; and those which came readiest to hand were the same, to a certain extent, as Aristophanes, in ignorance or wantonness, had long before brought against him. "What," he says in the Apology, "do my accusers say? It is this, 'Socrates acts wickedly, and with criminal curiosity investigates things under the earth, and in the heavens. He also makes the worse to be the better argument, and he teaches these things to others.' Such is the accusation; for things of this kind you also have yourselves seen in the comedy of Aristophanes; for there one Socrates is carried about, who affirms that he walks upon the air, and idly asserts many other trifles of this nature; of which things however I neither know much, nor little†." If we are to take this literally, it involves the charge of not believing in any gods at all, for such is the character of Socrates as given in the Clouds; a charge the falsity of which is amply proved both by Xenophon and Plato in their respective apologies. The charge of introducing new deities refers to the dæmon, or divine nature, by which Socrates professed to be guided in his conduct from a child, and which manifested itself by an internal voice, which never suggested anything, but very frequently warned him from that which he was about to do. False, however, as the charge against him was in all respects, Socrates appears to have felt that his condemnation was certain,

* Mitford, chap. xxxi. 2.

† Plat. Apol. § 3, part i. vol. ii. p. 93, ed., Bekker.

and to have taken no pains either to avert it or to escape. The orator Lysias is said to have composed a laboured speech which he offered to the philosopher to be used as his defence, but he declined it. His trial came on before the court of Heliæa, the most numerous tribunal in Athens, in which a body of judges sat, fluctuating in number, but usually consisting of several hundreds, chosen by lot from among the body of the citizens. It was not therefore to a bench of judges such as we are used to see them, bred to the law, and presumed at least to be dispassionate and unprejudiced, but to a popular assembly, that he had to plead. Nevertheless, he abstained studiously from every means of working on the passions, even to the usual method of supplication and moving pity by the introduction of his weeping family. Such appeals he thought unbecoming his own character, or the gravity of a court of justice, in which the question of the guilt or innocence of a prisoner ought alone to be regarded. Judgment, as he expected, was pronounced against him, though only by a majority of three. By the Athenian law, the guilt of an accused person being affirmed by the judges, a second question arose concerning the amount of his punishment. The accuser, in his charge, stated the penalty which he proposed to inflict; the prisoner had the privilege of speaking in mitigation of judgment, and naming that which he considered adequate to the offence. Socrates, at this stage of his trial, still preserved the same high tone*. If, he said, I am to estimate my own punishment, it must be according to my merits;

* The Apology of Plato, though commonly printed without any division, consists of three parts: Socrates' defence of himself; his second speech, as to the amount of punishment, which begins at § 25 (part i. vol. ii. p. 128, ed. Bekker); and his address to the judges after sentence of death was passed, which begins at § 29 (part i. vol. ii. p. 133).

and as these are great, I deserve that reward which is suited to a poor man who has been your benefactor, namely, a public maintenance in the Prytaneium*. Death, he said, he did not fear, not knowing whether it were a change for the better or the worse. Imprisonment and exile he esteemed worse than death, and being persuaded of his own innocence, he would never be party to a sentence of evil on himself. To a fine, if he had money to pay it, he had no objection, since the loss of the money would leave him no worse off than before; and as he was able to pay a *mina* of silver (about 4*l.* English), he would assess his punishment at that sum: or rather, at thirty minæ, as Plato and three other of his disciples expressed a wish to become his sureties to that amount.

This was not a line of conduct likely to excite pity, and sentence of death was passed by a larger majority than before. He again addressed a short speech to his judges, in which he tells them, that for the sake of cutting off a little from his life, already verging on the grave, they had incurred and brought on the city a lasting repoach, and that he might have escaped, if he would have condescended to use supplications and lamentations. Of his mode of defence, however, he repented not, seeing that he had rather die, having so spoken, than live by the use of unworthy methods; and that to escape death was far less difficult than to avoid baseness. He concluded by an address to the judges, who had voted for his acquittal, stating the grounds of his hopes that death would be a change for the better; the first of which is, that the dæmon had never opposed or checked his intended line of conduct during the whole of these proceedings, nor in his speeches had it ever stopped him from saying any thing that he meant to say, as it

* This public maintenance (σιτεῖσθαι ἐν πρυτανείῳ) was esteemed one of the highest honours that the state could confer.

was used often to do in conversation: from which he inferred, that his invisible guide had approved of all that he did, and that therefore a good thing was about to happen to him. Death, he said, was either insensibility, or a migration of the soul: in the former case, as compared with life, he esteemed it a change for the better; in the latter, if the general belief was true, what greater good could there be than to meet and enjoy the society of the great men of antiquity. Urging, therefore, these just judges to look confidently towards death, and to believe that to a good man, dead or alive, no real harm can happen; he concludes, "It is time that we should depart, I to die, you to live; but which of us to the better thing, is known to the Divinity alone."

Death usually followed close upon condemnation: but the death of Socrates was delayed by an Athenian usage of great antiquity, said to have been instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of Attica by Theseus from the tyranny of Minos. Every year the sacred ship in which Theseus had sailed to Crete, was despatched with offerings to the sacred island of Delos, and in the interim between its departure and return, no criminals were ever put to death. Socrates was condemned the evening before its departure, and consequently he was respited until its return,—a period of thirty days. During this time his friends had access to him; and the dialogues of Plato, entitled Criton and Phædon, purport to be the substance of conversations held by him towards the close of this time. If he had been willing to escape, the gaoler was bribed and the means of escape prepared; but this was a breach of the laws which he refused to countenance, and he still thought, as he had said in his speech, exile to be worse than death. On the last day of his life, when his friends were admitted at sunrise, they found him with his wife and one child. These

were soon dismissed, lest their lamentations should disturb his last interview with his friends and pupils: and he commenced a conversation which speedily turned on the immortality of the soul, the arguments for which, as they could best be developed by one of the acutest of human intellects, without the assistance of revelation, are summed up in that celebrated dialogue, the Phædon, which professes to relate all the events of this last day of the philosopher's life. It concludes as follows:—

"When he had thus spoken, 'Be it so, Socrates,' said Criton; 'but what orders do you leave to these who are present, or to myself, either respecting your children, or anything else, in the execution of which we should most gratify you?' 'What I always do say Criton (he replied), nothing new: that if you pay due attention to yourselves, do what you will, you will always do what is acceptable to myself, to my family, and to your ownselves, though you should not now promise me any thing. But if you neglect yourselves, and are unwilling to live following the track, as it were, of what I have said both now and heretofore, you will do nothing the more, though you should now promise many things, and that with earnestness.' 'We shall take care therefore,' said Criton, 'so to act. But how would you be buried?' 'Just as you please (said he), if you can but catch me, and I do not elude your pursuit.' And at the same time gently laughing, and addressing himself to us, 'I cannot persuade Criton,' he said, 'my friends, that I am that Socrates who now disputes with you, and methodizes every part of the discourse: but he thinks that I am he whom he will shortly behold dead, and asks how I ought to be buried. But all that long discourse which some time since I addressed to you, in which I asserted that after I had drunk the poison I should no longer remain with you, but should

depart to certain felicities of the blessed, this I seem to have declared to him in vain, though it was undertaken to console both you and myself. Be surety, therefore, for me to Criton, to the reverse of that, for which he became surety for me to the judges; for he was my bail that I should remain; but be you my bail that I shall not remain when I die, but shall depart hence, that Criton may bear it the more easily, and may not be afflicted when he sees my body burnt or buried, as if I were suffering some dreadful misfortune; and that he may not say at my interment, that Socrates is laid out, or carried out, or is buried. For be well assured of this, my friend Criton, that when we speak amiss, we are not only blameable as to our expressions, but likewise do some evil to our souls. But it is fit to be of good heart, and to say that my body will be buried, and to bury it in such manner as may be most pleasing to yourself, and as you may esteem it most agreeable to our laws.'"

When he had thus spoken, he arose, and went into another room, that he might wash himself, and Criton followed him: but he ordered us to wait for him. We waited therefore accordingly, discoursing over, and reviewing among ourselves what had been said; and sometimes speaking about his death, how great a calamity it would be to us; and sincerely thinking that we, like those who are deprived of their fathers, should pass the rest of our life in the condition of orphans. But when he had washed himself, his sons were brought to him (for he had two little ones, and one older), and the women belonging to his family likewise came in to him: but when he had spoken to them before Criton, and had left them such injunctions as he thought proper, he ordered the boys and women to depart, and he himself returned to us. And it was now near the setting of the sun; for he had been away in the inner room for a long time.

But when he came in from bathing he sat down, and did not speak much afterwards: for then the servant of the Eleven* came in, and standing near him, "I do not perceive that in you, Socrates," said he, "which I have taken notice of in others; I mean that they are angry with me, and curse me, when, being compelled by the magistrates, I announce to them that they must drink the poison. But, on the contrary, I have found you to the present time to be the most generous, mild, and best of all the men that ever came into this place; and therefore I am well convinced that you are not angry with me, but with the authors of your present condition, for you know who they are. Now, therefore (for you know what I came to tell you), farewell; and endeavour to bear this necessity as easily as possible." And at the same time, bursting into tears, and turning himself away, he departed. But Socrates, looking after him, said, "And thou, too, farewell; and we shall take care to act as you advise." And at the same time, turning to us, "How courteous," he said, "is the behaviour of that man! During the whole time of my abode here, he has visited me, and often conversed with me, and proved himself to be the best of men; and now how generously he weeps on my account! But let us obey him, Criton, and let some one bring the poison, if it is bruised; and if not, let the man whose business it is, bruise it." "But, Socrates," said Criton, "I think that the sun still hangs over the mountains, and is not set yet. And at the same time I have known others who have drunk the poison very late, after it was announced to them; who have supped and drank abundantly. Therefore, do not be in such haste, for there is yet time enough." Socrates replied, "Such men, Criton, act fitly in the manner which you

* Athenian magistrates, who had the charge of executing criminals.

have described, for they think to derive some advantage by so doing; and I also with propriety shall not act in this manner. For I do not think I shall gain any thing by drinking it later, except becoming ridiculous to myself through desiring to live, and being sparing of life, when nothing of it any longer remains. Go, therefore," said he, "be persuaded, and comply with my request."

Then Criton hearing this, gave a sign to the boy that stood near him; and the boy departing, and having staid for some time, came back with the person that was to administer the poison, who brought it pounded in a cup. And Socrates, looking at the man, said, "Well, my friend (for you are knowing in these matters), what is to be done?" "Nothing (he said) "but, after you have drunk it, to walk about, until a heaviness takes place in your legs, and then to lie down: this is the manner in which you have to act." And at the same time he extended the cup to Socrates. And Socrates taking it—and indeed, Echecrates—with great cheerfulness, neither trembling, nor suffering any change for the worse in his colour or countenance, but as he was used to do, looking up sternly * at the man. "What say you," he said, "as to making a libation from this potion? may I do it or not?" "We only bruise as much, Socrates," he said, "as we think sufficient for the purpose." "I understand you," he said; "but it is both lawful and proper to pray to the gods, that my departure from hence thither may be prosperous: which I entreat them to grant may be the case." And so saying, he stopped, and drank the poison very readily and pleasantly. And thus far indeed the greater part of us were tolerably well able to refrain from weeping: but when we saw him drinking, and that he had drank it, we could no longer restrain our tears. And from me indeed, in

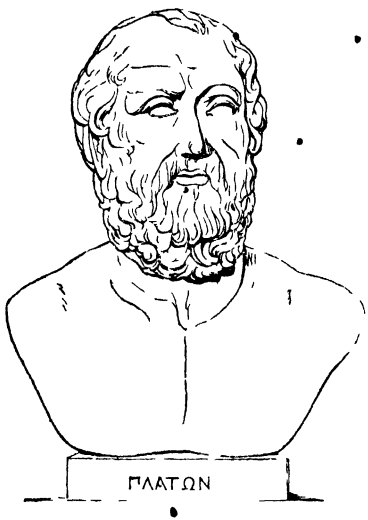
* ταυρηδὸν ὑπιβλέψας, looking up like a bull.

spite of my efforts, they flowed, and not drop by drop*; so that wrapping myself in my mantle, I bewailed myself, not indeed for his misfortune, but for my own, considering what a companion I should be deprived of. But Criton, who was not able to restrain his tears, was compelled to rise before me. And Apollodorus, who during the whole time prior to this had not ceased from weeping, then wept aloud with great bitterness, so that he infected all who were present except Socrates. But Socrates, upon seeing this, exclaimed, "What are you doing, you strange men! In truth, I principally sent away the women lest they should produce a disturbance of this kind; for I have heard that it is proper to die among well-omened sounds†. Be quiet, therefore, and maintain your fortitude." And when we heard this, we were ashamed, and restrained our tears. But he, when he found during his walking about that his legs became heavy, and had told us so, laid himself down on his back. For the man had told him to do so. And at the same time he who gave him the poison, touching him at intervals, examined his feet and legs. And then pressing very hard on his foot, he asked him if he felt it. But Socrates answered that he did not. And after this he pressed his thighs, and thus, going upwards, he showed us that he was cold and stiff. And Socrates also touched himself, and said that when the poison reached his heart, he should then depart. But now the lower part of his body was almost cold; when uncovering himself (for he was covered), he said (and these were his

* That is, profusely.

† The Greeks thought it of much consequence that any momentous business should be undertaken under favourable omens. Sounds of lamentation were ill omened; even the direct mention of death was avoided when a periphrasis would serve. The tragic poets abound in instances of this sort of *euphemism*.

last words), "Criton, we owe a cock to Æsculapius. Discharge this debt therefore for me, and do not neglect it." "It shall be done," said Criton, "but consider whether you have any other commands." To this inquiry of Criton he made no reply; but shortly after moved himself, and the man uncovered him. And Socrates fixed his eyes; which, when Criton perceived, he closed his mouth and eyes. "This, Echecrates, was the end of our companion; a man, as it appears to me, the best of those whom we were acquainted with at that time, and besides this, the most prudent and just *."



Such is the narration which Cicero professed him-

* Taylor's translation of Plato. Some slight alterations have been made, where the translator seemed to have gone unnecessarily far from the language of the original.

self unable to read without tears. Its celebrity and beauty will, we hope, be received as a sufficient excuse for giving this version of a passage which, as a whole, is little known in an English dress; for we must confess, that while history, both ancient and modern, abounds in events analogous in the nature of their interest to the death of Socrates, we find none which, strictly speaking, can be regarded as parallels to it. This arises in part from our hardly knowing whether to refer his prosecution and condemnation to private hatred; or to the enmity of the sophists, and the powerful party which supported them; or to the genuine zeal of religious bigotry; or to a political fear that the doctrines taught by Socrates were calculated to breed up a set of men in too little respect for the democracy. All these causes have been assigned; and whatever the motive which influenced his accusers, all may have had their influence on the judges who condemned him, as well as that unworthy pride which is expressly mentioned by Xenophon* as having prevented the acquittal of his master. Whether therefore we seek our instances among civil or religious persecutions, we shall scarcely find any thing strictly analogous to the death of Socrates; and as we have said, it is here introduced more for the beauty of the narrative than for the sake of comparison. To that beauty, and to the talents of the historian, Socrates and his resignation owe no small share of their extraordinary celebrity. It is well remarked by Mitford,

* "Socrates, though it was the common practice for criminals at the bar to address the passions, and to flatter and entreat their judges, and by such means often to obtain acquittals, would on no account do any of those things, which, contrary to law, were continually done in the courts; but though he might readily have gained his acquittal from his judges if he had done such things even in a moderate degree, chose rather to die, abiding by the laws, than to live by transgressing them." Xen. Mem. c. iv. § 4.

that though "the magnanimity of Socrates surely deserves admiration, yet it is not that in which he has most outshone other men. The circumstances of Lord Russell's fate were far more trying. Socrates, as we may reasonably suppose, would have borne Lord Russell's trial: but with Bishop Burnet for his eulogist, instead of Plato and Xenophon, he would not have had his present splendid fame*.'

The power of meeting an inevitable death with firmness and composure, is so far from being uncommon, that our interest in examples of it might be supposed to be deadened by their frequent occurrence. It is to be found, the outward show of it at least, in all stations, from the martyr for religion, or patriotism, down to the humble and profligate sufferer who forfeits his life as a convicted felon. The fancied gaiety of Captain Macheath is as true to nature as the cheerfulness of Sir Thomas Moore; and the iron resolution of the murderer Thurtell enabled him to face death as composedly as Charles I. or Algernon Sidney. Still we do read with eagerness and admiration of Moore's cheerful jocularity on the scaffold, of the holy resignation of Latimer, and the high-souled, yet tender and womanly deportment of Lady Jane Grey. The subject seems to possess an interest not easily exhausted. Historians therefore have seldom thought the last hours of great men unworthy of notice: and the constancy and dying professions of those who have laid down their lives for their political or religious opinions have always been eagerly treasured up by friends and followers, as evidences both of the sincerity and truth of their belief. Yet such evidence is doubtful even in respect of the former, and null in respect of the latter; for there never perhaps was a cause important enough to challenge persecution, which did not find persons ready to suffer martyrdom for its sake.

* Hist. of Greece, chap. xxii. § 3.

In selecting the examples which occupy the rest of this chapter, it has been endeavoured to take such, as, relating to important and spirit-stirring seasons, are yet likely not to be familiar in their details to all our readers. We do not profess that they will bear a close comparison with the prosecution of Socrates: on the contrary, we may here again express our belief that nothing can be found analogous either to the character or the history of that extraordinary man. Nor shall we attempt to make out a resemblance where no real one exists. The design of this work will be sufficiently fulfilled, if the following passages of history shall appear interesting: the lessons which they convey cannot be otherwise than profitable. The first and third refer to persecutions purely religious in their character; the second refers to what, under the appearance of a religious persecution, was in fact quite as much a plot against civil liberty.

The first embraces a short sketch of the history and death of two among the most eminent of the early Reformers, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. John Huss, or rather John of Hussinetz (for he derived his name, according to a common usage of that time, from the place of his birth), was a Bohemian priest, educated at the University of Prague. His talents, and the simplicity and severity of his life, raised him through subordinate stations to the high office of Rector of the University. By some means, the nature of which is not quite clear, the opinions and works of our venerable Wiclif, the first translator of the Bible into the English tongue, were conveyed into Bohemia towards the close of the fourteenth century. They struck deep root in that soil: a circumstance to be attributed in no small degree to the effect produced by Wiclif's character and doctrines upon the mind of Huss; who conceived so deep a veneration for his preceptor, that in

his sermons to the people in the chapel of Bethlehem (a chapel endowed by a pious citizen of Prague, to enable two preachers to address the lower orders in the Bohemian tongue), he is said often to have addressed his earnest vows to Heaven, that "whensoever he should be removed from this life, he might be admitted to the same regions where the soul of Wiclif resided; since he doubted not that he was a good and holy man, and worthy of a habitation in heaven*." Already eminent for his philosophical attainments, Huss had obtained another kind of celebrity, so early as the year 1405, by these sermons, in which he inveighed powerfully against the extortions and corruptions by which the papal hierarchy had disfigured the purity of christian faith. He continued to preach, unchecked, till the year 1409, when the Archbishop of Prague commenced open war on the new doctrines, by ordering all members of the university who possessed Wiclif's writings to bring them in, that those which were found to be heretical might be publicly burnt. Two hundred volumes are said to have been thus destroyed. Huss, and other members of the university, appealed to the Pope; but, as might have been expected, their cause took an unfavourable turn, and the Archbishop was empowered to suppress the doctrines of Wiclif within his diocese. Huss, however, with his friend, pupil, and fellow-sufferer, Jerome of Prague, master of theology in the university, continued to preach: and the people followed them, in spite of the combination and determined opposition of the clergy in general. Huss was in consequence summoned to appear at Rome. He refused to place himself in the power of the Pope, but sent three deputies to plead his cause. The deputies were insulted and maltreated, and he himself was declared guilty of contumacy, and excommunicated. Against this censure he published a formal protest,

* Hist. of Church, p. 587.

in which, after reciting authorities to justify the step which he was taking, narrating his excommunication, and explaining the injustice and informality of the proceedings under which he was condemned, he concludes, "It is therefore manifest that, none of these conditions being fulfilled in my case, I am acquitted before God of the crime of contumacy, and am unbound by a pretended and frivolous excommunication. I, John Huss, present this appeal to Jesus Christ, my master and just judge, who knows and protects the just cause of every one*."

He continued accordingly to preach at Prague till early in the year 1413, when the Archbishop interposed, and Huss retired, apparently to the place of his birth. But he continued to write, and his doctrines were readily received by the Bohemians, though zealously opposed by the great body of the clergy. On the meeting of the Council of Constance, in 1414, Huss was called before it, to declare and to defend his opinions. He had disobeyed the summons of the Pope, but he recognized the authority of the church in its general council, and obeyed its call with alacrity. It seems to have been his earnest desire to explain the grounds of his faith, and to confess his error, if he could be convinced of error, in those points wherein he differed from the received doctrines of the church. With this view, before he went to Constance, he appeared before a synod of the clergy held at Prague, with the express view of declaring and supporting his peculiar tenets: and when permission to do so was refused, he affixed placards in places of public resort, in which he expressed his intention of appearing at Constance, and invited all who had any complaint to make against him to appear in support of it†.

* L'Enfant. Hist. de Concile de Constance. Liv. I.

† He caused this document to be published at Nuremberg. "Master John Huss goes to Constance, there to declare the

The charges against Huss may be reduced to two heads (unless indeed they should rather be considered as one): that he was a follower of Wiclif, and that he was infected with the "leprosy of the Vaudois." The opinions contained under the latter charge are thus enumerated (with the exception of a few particulars), from Æneas Sylvius*, by Mr. Waddington; it being premised that, of those thus imputed to him, Huss expressly disavowed many. "The most important of them were these:—that the Pope is on a level with other bishops; that all priests are equal, except in regard to personal merit; that souls, on quitting their bodies, are immediately condemned to eternal punishment, or exalted to everlasting happiness; that the fire of purgatory has no existence; that prayers for the dead are a vain device, the invention of sacerdotal avarice; that the images of God and the saints should be destroyed; that the orders of mendicants were invented by evil spirits; that the clergy ought to be poor, subsisting on eleemosynary contributions; that it is free to all men to preach the word of God; that any one guilty of mortal sin is thereby disqualified for any dignity, secular or ecclesiastical; that confirmation and extreme unction are not among the holy rites of the church; that auricular confession is unprofitable, since confession to God is sufficient for pardon; that the use of cemeteries is without reason-

faith which he has always held, holds now, and by God's grace, will hold unto death. As he has given public notice throughout the kingdom of Bohemia, that he was willing before his departure, to give account of his faith at a general synod of the Archbishopric of Prague, to answer all the objections which could be made to it, so he notifies in this imperial city of Nuremberg, that if any one has any error or heresy to object to him, such person has only to repair to the Council of Constance, since it is there that he is ready to give account of his faith." L'Enfant. Lav. 1. p. 39.

* Hist. Bohemica, c. xxxv.

able foundation, and inculcated for the sake of profit; that the world itself is the temple of the omnipotent God, and that those only derogate from his Majesty who build churches, monasteries, or oratories; that the sacerdotal vestments, the ornaments of the altars, the cups and other sacred utensils, are of no more than vulgar estimation; that the suffrages of the saints who reign with Christ in heaven are unprofitable and vainly invoked; that there is no holiday excepting Sunday; that the festivals of the saints should by no means be observed; and that the fasts established by the church are equally destitute of divine authority." Of these doctrines, whether truly or falsely imputed to Huss, many were of a nature to excite the anger of a corrupt and avaricious priesthood; and he is said to have added another still more calculated to prejudice the minds of his judges against him: he maintained that tithes were strictly eleemosynary, and that it was free for the owner of the land to withhold or pay them according to the measure of his charity. He also maintained the right of the laity to participate in the sacramental cup. It appears from a short treatise, written in the year 1413, and exposed to public view at the chapel of Bethlehem, entitled 'Six Errors,' that he denied to the priesthood the power of granting remission of punishment and absolution from sin; that he condemned the doctrine, that obedience is due to a superior in all things; that he maintained that an unjust excommunication was not binding on the person against whom it was levelled; and that he condemned as heretical the simoniacal offences against canon law, of which he accused a large portion of the clergy. He also in his sermons condemned as useless, prayers for the souls of the dead, though it appears in the same sermon that he believed in purgatory; and rebuked the avarice of the priests, by whom the practice of exacting large presents, as the

price of ransoming souls from purgatory by their masses, had been invented*.

The readiness of Huss to face the Council is not to be ascribed to ignorance of the risk which he was about to incur. He addressed a letter to one of his friends, with a request indorsed, that it might not be opened, except in case of his death: it contained a species of confession. He also wrote an exhortation to his Bohemian congregation, in which he urges them to remain constant in the doctrine which he had faithfully preached to them; expresses his belief, that he should meet with more enemies at the Council than Christ had at Jerusalem; prays for help and strength to maintain the truth to the last, resolved to suffer any extremes, rather than betray the Gospel from any cowardice; requests the prayers of his friends in his behalf; and speaks very doubtfully of his return, expressing his willingness to die in God's cause†. Yet if good faith were necessarily inherent in high rank, he had no reason to fear. The Emperor Sigismond gave him a safe conduct, pledging himself, and enjoining his subjects, to facilitate and secure the safe passage of Huss to and fro: and Pope John XXIII. professed, "though John Huss should murder my own brother, I would use the whole of my power to preserve him from every injury, during all the time of his residence at Constance." He arrived in that city in November 1414. But the first proceedings of the Council showed that anything rather than an impartial hearing was intended. Huss was committed to close custody, and denied the privilege of being heard by an advocate, though he lay sick in prison; on the ground that the canon law allowed no one to undertake the defence of persons suspected of heresy. Meanwhile, he was harassed with private interrogatories, and denied a public audience before the assembled Council.

* L'Enfant. Liv. 1, p. 36, 37. † Ibid. p. 40.

This right he demanded with urgency; and the interference of the Emperor Sigismond, who seems to have felt in this instance what was due to one who was placed under his protection, procured it for him. Early in June, 1415, the Council was convened, to hear the charges against him, and his defence. The first charge was read, and he began to reply: but when he appealed to Scripture, as the authority on which his doctrines were founded, his voice was overwhelmed with clamour. He ceased: but when he again attempted to speak, the clamour was renewed; and the assembly adjourned in confusion to June 7, on which day the Emperor was requested to preside in person. His presence secured more decency of proceeding. The charges brought against Huss were based chiefly on his supposed adherence to the doctrines of Wiclif (concerning the truth of which it was needless to dispute, since they had already been condemned by the Council, May 4, 1415), and on his opinion as to the administration of the Eucharist. The arguments which he was permitted to adduce were received, as before, with shouts of derision, and the assembly adjourned to the following day. It happened, and the coincidence was calculated to make a deep impression on the minds of those who inclined to his doctrines, that on that day an eclipse of the sun took place, which was total at Prague, and nearly total at Constance.

His audience was renewed on the following day. Of the opinions imputed to him, he rejected some, and admitted others; and those which he did admit, he defended temperately and reasonably. The hearing being closed, he was required by the Council to retract his errors. It does not appear that any distinction was made between those which he admitted, and those which he denied: the Council assumed, that he held certain opinions, and he was called to recant them in the gross, or to seal his adherence to them

by martyrdom. His reply bears testimony to the purity of his motives, and to the humility of his temper. "As to the opinions imputed to me, which I have never held, those I cannot retract; as to those which I do indeed profess, I am ready to retract them, when I shall be better instructed by the Council." The Emperor, who had taken an active part in persuading him to save himself by submission*, now avowed his opinion, that "among the errors of Huss, which had been in part proved, and in part confessed, there was not one which did not deserve the penal flames;" and "that the temporal sword ought instantly to be drawn, for the chastisement of his disciples, to the end that the branches of the tree might perish, together with its root." The Council was not slow to inflict the penalty thus recommended. Huss was remanded to prison: his constancy was severely tried by a month's imprisonment, in which every means of persuasion and solicitation were used to induce him to retract, and live. But he continued calm and resolved, in a strain of mind equally removed from pride and stubbornness, and from laxity and indifference, replying to those who urged him to abjure his belief, that "he was prepared to afford an example in himself of that enduring patience which he had so frequently preached to others, and which he relied on the grace of God to grant him." He retained this temper to the end; and in this he may serve as a pattern, or a rebuke, to many persons, who, though zealous for the truth, have shown in

* Sigismond is said to have blushed when Huss fixed his eyes on him; as he declared to the Council that he had come willingly, under the pledged protection of the Emperor there present. Charles V., when pressed to arrest Luther at the Diet of Worms, is said, in allusion to this circumstance, to have used the following expression: "I do not mean to blush with my predecessor Sigismond." The conduct of the two Emperors towards Huss and Luther is well contrasted throughout; and Charles was not a less zealous Catholic than his predecessor.

the character of martyrs as much of bigotry and intolerance as their persecutors; and this temper was shown nowhere more beautifully than in one of his last trials, "if indeed (we quote from Mr. Waddington,) we can so designate the upright counsel of a faithful and virtuous friend, for such was the circumstance which completed and crowned the history of his imprisonment; and it should be every where recorded, for the honour of human nature. A Bohemian nobleman, named John of Chlum, had attended Huss, whose disciple he was, through all his perils and persecutions, and had exerted throughout the whole affair every method that he could learn or devise to save him. At length, when every hope was lost, and he was about to separate from the martyr for the last time, he addressed him in these terms, 'My dear master, I am unlettered, and consequently unfit to counsel one so enlightened as you. Nevertheless, if you are secretly conscious of any one of those errors which have been publicly imputed to you, I do entreat you not to feel any shame in retracting it; but if, on the contrary, you are convinced of your innocence, I am so far from advising you to say anything against your conscience, that I exhort you rather to endure every form of torture, than to renounce anything which you hold to be true.' John Huss replied with tears, that God was his witness, how ready he had ever been, and still was, to retract on oath, and with his whole heart, from the moment he should be convicted of any error, by *evidence from the Holy Scripture**." He confirmed this assertion in a letter, written on the eve of his execution, to the Senate of Prague, warning them that he had retracted and abjured nothing, but was ready to abjure and express his detestation of every proposition extracted from his books which could be proved contrary to Scripture.

* Hist. of Church, p. 594.

Thus passed the month between his trial and his execution, not in struggles to avoid, but in preparation to meet his fate. "God," he said, "in his wisdom, has reasons for thus prolonging my life." On the 15th of July, he was brought before the Council for the last time. He listened on his knees while his sentence was read; and though it was endeavoured to prevent him from speaking, he asserted from time to time the falsehood of some of the charges brought against him. That of obstinacy, for instance, he repelled hardily. "This," he said, "I deny boldly. I always have, and do still desire to be better instructed by Scripture; and assert, that I am so zealous for the truth, that if by one word I could overthrow the errors of all heretics, there is no peril which I would not face for that end." Against the condemnation of his books he protested, because hitherto no errors had been shown to exist in them, and because, being chiefly written in Bohemian, or translated into languages understood by few of the members, the Council could not read, nor understand, nor, by consequence, legitimately condemn them. At the close of the sentence, he called God to witness his innocence, and offered a prayer that his judges and accusers might find pardon. Nothing then remained but to proceed to his degradation; and it may not be irrelevant to give a short account of the forms used in this ceremony, childish as they may appear. Certain bishops, appointed to perform this office, caused Huss to be robed in his full sacerdotal vestments, and a cup to be placed in his hand, as if he were going to perform mass. As they put upon him a long white robe, named the *aube*, he said, "Our Saviour was clothed, in mockery, in a white robe, when sent by Herod before Pilate:" and he made similar reflections as the other ensigns of the sacred functions were successively put upon him. Being thus dressed, the

bishops again exhorted him to recant; but turning to the people, he declared in a loud voice, that he never would offend and seduce the faithful by a declaration so full of hypocrisy and impiety, and thus publicly protested his innocence. Then the bishops took from him the chalice, reciting the words, "O cursed Judas, who having forsaken the counsel of peace, hast entered into that of the Jews, we take away this cup, &c.," according to the common formula for degrading a priest. On this, Huss said aloud, that through the mercy of God, he hoped that day to drink of that cup in his kingdom. The bishops then took away his sacerdotal garments, one after the other, pronouncing some malediction at the removal of each. When they came to obliterate the tonsure, the mark of priesthood, a ludicrous question arose, whether scissars or razors should be used; and after a warm debate, it was decided in favour of the former. His hair was closely cropped, a pyramidal paper cap, an ell high, painted with figures of devils, and inscribed, "Heresiarch," was put on his head; and thus attired, the prelates charitably consigned his soul to the infernal devils *. Divested thus of the sacred character of priesthood, he was delivered over to the secular power, represented by the Emperor, under whose safe-conduct he had repaired to Constance, and who had yet openly given his voice for causing the heretic to expiate his errors by the torments of fire. The Emperor charged the Elector Palatine with the duty of seeing the penalties of the law inflicted: and it is said, that a succeeding elector, the descendant in the fourth generation of the person thus employed, who was a favourer of the reformation, and dying childless, witnessed the extinction of his line, was wont to attribute that misfortune to the anger of Heaven, punishing in the fourth gene-

* Animam tuam devovemus infernis diabolis. *Æn. Sylv.*

ration the bigoted and cruel eagerness with which his ancestor had executed the unholy task intrusted to him on this occasion.

Huss was immediately conducted to the stake, and suffered his agonizing death with unshaken firmness. It is told by an old writer of his life, that the people said, hearing the fervency of his address to God, "We do not know what this man has done before; but now, we hear him offer up excellent prayers." His ashes were carefully collected and cast into the Rhine, lest they should serve to keep up the affection of his friends: but the precaution was vain, for we are told* that the very earth of the spot on which he was burnt was collected as a sacred relic, and carried into Bohemia by his disciples.

Before the fate of Huss was determined, the Council had wreaked a tardy vengeance on his forerunner and preceptor Wiclif, whose body was ordered "to be taken from the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church." After the lapse of thirteen years, the empty insult was most effectually executed, by disinterring and burning the reformer's body, and casting the ashes into a neighbouring brook. The often quoted words of Fuller on this occasion may be equally well applied to the good man whose history has just been related:—"The brook did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wiclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

Jerome of Prague has been already mentioned as the most distinguished among Huss's followers, and his coadjutor in preaching. He also was summoned to Constance in the spring of 1415, before Huss had suffered martyrdom; and it was probably in consequence of witnessing his companion's sufferings,

* Æneas Sylvius, Hist. Bohemica. c. xxxvi.

that he was induced to retract, to condemn in the strongest terms, as blasphemous and seditious, the tenets which in his heart he still continued to hold, and to profess his entire adherence to all the doctrines of the Roman church. Fortunately he was not left to endure through life the reproaches of conscience; for the continued enmity and mistaken persecution of his adversaries conferred a benefit on him which they were far from intending. He was still retained in confinement, and harassed with fresh charges, though his retractation had been ample and complete: for there were many who thought that hostility to the hierarchy could not be expiated except by blood. At last he obtained a public audience before the Council, on the 23d of May, 1416; when he recalled his former recantation, confessing that it had been dictated only by the fear of a painful death. There is a close coincidence between the history of Jerome, and that of the father of our English church, Cranmer, who suffered a similar death in the following century. Both swerved through the influence of fear from the path of duty; both were punished for their weakness by being treacherously deprived of that temporal advantage which was the price of their apostacy; and, being recalled by that mistaken malice to their duty, both redeemed their virtue, and have obtained eternal honour in exchange for a short and shameful breathing time on earth. Poggio the Florentine, who was a witness of the whole course of Jerome's trial, has left a long and interesting account of it in a letter to Leonardo Aretino, from which it appears that his sympathy had been strongly excited by the constancy of the sufferer. Though connected with the highest dignitaries of the church, he writes in such a strain of admiration, that his friend thought it necessary to warn him of the danger which he might incur by speaking of a condemned heretic in such terms. The letter will be found

entirely translated in Mr. Shepherd's Life of Poggio Bracciolini, from which the following description of Jerome's final sufferings is extracted:—"No stoic ever suffered death with such constancy of mind: when he arrived at the place of execution he stripped himself of his garments, and knelt down before the stake, to which he was soon after tied with ropes and a chain. Then great pieces of wood, intermixed with straw, were piled as high as his breast. When fire was set to the pile, he begun to sing a hymn, which was scarcely interrupted by the smoke and flame. I must not omit a striking circumstance, which shows the firmness of his mind. When the executioner was going to apply the fire behind him, in order that he might not see it, he said, Come this way, and kindle it in my sight; for if I had been afraid of it, I should never have come to this place. Thus perished a man in every respect exemplary, except in the erroneousness of his faith. I was a witness of his end, and observed every particular of its process. He may have been heretical in his notions, and obstinate in persevering in them: but he certainly died like a philosopher. I have rehearsed a long story; as I wish to employ my leisure in relating a transaction which far surpasses the events of ancient history. For neither did Mutius suffer his hand to be burnt so patiently as Jerome endured the burning of his whole body; nor did Socrates drink the hemlock as cheerfully as Jerome submitted to the fire."

If it were really hoped to purge the dross of heresy from Bohemia by this fiery ordeal, the result is another lesson to prove the inutility of combating opinion by violence. The nobility considered the breach of the Emperor's safe-conduct as an insult to the kingdom of Bohemia: the commons, prepared for rebellion against the spiritual dominion of Rome, and inflamed by the fate of their loved and venerated

teachers, broke into acts of violence. Fresh measures of provocation on each side soon led to extremities; a crusade was proclaimed against Bohemia by Pope Martin V., and headed by the Emperor Sigismond; and the quarrel was thus fairly committed to the arbitration of the sword. Enthusiasm made up for the apparent inequality of force: the insurgents assumed the name of Taborites, named the mountain, on which they pitched their tents, Tabor, and stigmatized their neighbours by the names of the idolatrous nations from whom the Israelites won the Holy Land. They often defeated the armies of the church, and maintained their ground so firmly, that in 1433 the Council of Basle endeavoured to invite their leaders to a conference. This attempt at pacification failed; but it taught the Catholics how to avail themselves of the religious differences which distracted these enthusiastic men: and in 1436, the church and the Emperor gained the final ascendency, more by civil discord than by the sword. But in the fifteenth century, a numerous party in Bohemia preserved the faith for which Huss and Jerome had suffered, and their fathers had fought; and received with joy the ampler reformation preached by Luther.

The second subject which we have proposed to notice belongs to a period of much interest in British history, that of the fruitless attempt of Charles II. to re-impose episcopacy upon the Scottish nation. Few spectacles are more elevating and more improving than the patient endurance of evil for conscience' sake even in an individual; and it is still more impressive, where a multitude are actuated by common feelings and a common principle. Such was the case with the persecuted body of the Scottish Presbyterian peasants; and if there be any to whom the question, whether a written ritual or extemporaneous prayer should be used, whether the Episcopal

or Presbyterian form of church government should prevail, appear insufficient grounds of dispute to justify a civil war, it is to be remembered that in this case the aggression was entirely on the side of the government; that Charles II. had more than once taken the Covenant, the mere refusal to abjure which was now thought worthy of death; that the rebels, if that name be applicable to them, sought nothing more than liberty to serve God after their own consciences; and farther, that the arbitrary violence which would have annulled the established church of Scotland, to substitute another which the bulk of the nation hated, was only one of that series of mistaken and criminal measures which led to the expulsion of the House of Stuart from the throne. Upwards of three hundred ministers were driven from their livings in one day, to derive a scanty maintenance from their poor but zealous hearers: but these men neither offered resistance, nor preached rebellion, until they were debarred from performing their pastoral office. And even when they and their followers did take arms, it was originally in self-defence, to protect meetings for the peaceable purpose of divine worship, held in the wildest recesses of the trackless hills, from the fury of a most licentious soldiery, which even that strict concealment could not mitigate or elude. That the better cause was disgraced by some extravagancies and crimes, and that it gave rise in some to a morose and gloomy spirit of fanaticism, will not surprise any who have considered the effect of persecution, which, the very converse of mercy, is twice cursed in its operation, a curse on him who inflicts, as on him who suffers. Driven to assemble in moss and mountain, girt with their swords, and prepared to defend life and faith by the strong hand, it is no wonder if these men turned in preference to the warlike pages of the sacred records, and in tone, and conduct, and phraseology

imitated the martial leaders and reformers of Judæa, rather than the milder teachers of the religion which it was their boast to hold fast in its utmost purity. Continually occupied by the thought of death, engaged in a constant struggle to subdue their natural fears and affections into the resolution to serve the Lord after what they deemed the only true faith, and to abide in him to the uttermost, it is no wonder that Cameron, Cargill, Peden, and other zealous preachers, whose rude and stern eloquence roused the Scottish peasant to the endurance of martyrdom, in many instances lost sight of reason in enthusiasm, and in some, themselves or their followers, committed acts which rendered them justly amenable to legal punishment*. It forms, however, no part

* The murder of Archbishop Sharpe is the most celebrated and remarkable of these instances of perverted enthusiasm, mistaken applications of the Old Testament, and determination to see a *special* Providence in passing events. Burley, Rathillet, and their associates, when they met on the Magus Muir, had no thought of harming Sharpe: but when his coach passed that way, they concluded that the Lord had delivered him into their hands; and therefore they killed him. For the effect of the persecution, see Fox's Hist. of James II. "This system of government, and especially the rigour with which those concerned in the late insurrections, the excommunication of the king, or the other outrages complained of, were pursued and hunted, sometimes by blood-hounds, sometimes by soldiers almost equally savage, and afterwards shot like wild beasts, drove some of those sectaries who were styled Cameronians, and other proscribed persons, to measures of absolute desperation. They made a declaration, which they caused to be affixed to different churches, importing that they would use the law of retaliation, and '*we will*,' said they, '*punish as enemies to God, and to the covenant, such persons as shall make it their work to imbrue their hands in our blood; and chiefly, if they shall continue obstinately and with habitual malice to proceed against us*,' with more to the like effect. Upon such an occasion, the interference of government became necessary. The government did indeed interfere, and by a vote of council ordered, that whoever owned, or refused to disown, the declaration on oath, should be put to death, in the presence of two witnesses, though unarmed when taken. The execution of this massacre, in the twelve counties which were

of our subject, to enter into a defence of their conduct or doctrine. The lofty spirit of resignation in which they met their fate, is the only point in their history which admits of comparison with the subject-matter of this chapter; and in this respect, the Athenian philosopher had no advantage over the humblest of these unlettered peasants. The stories of their resignation, nay of their exultation in the hour of trial, have been preserved by tradition; and their scattered graves in the wild moorlands of Southern Scotland are still regarded with veneration and affection. May it be long before a feeling

principally concerned, was committed to the military, and exceeded, if possible, the order itself. The disowning the declaration was required to be made in a particular form prescribed. Women obstinate in their fanaticism, lest female blood should be a stain upon the swords of soldiers engaged in this honourable employment, were drowned. The habitations, as well of those who had fled to save themselves, as of those who suffered, were burnt and destroyed. Such members of the families of the delinquents as were above twelve years old, were imprisoned for the purpose of being afterwards transported. The brutality of the soldiers was such as might be expected from an army let loose from all restraint, and employed to execute the royal justice, as it was called, upon wretches. Graham, who has been mentioned before, and who, under the title of Lord Dundee (a title which was probably conferred on him by James for these or similar services), was afterwards esteemed such a hero among the Jacobite party, particularly distinguished himself. Of six unarmed fugitives whom he seized, he caused four to be shot in his presence, nor did the remaining two experience any other mercy from him than a delay of their doom; and at another time, having intercepted the flight of one of these victims, he had him shown to his family, and then murdered in the arms of his wife. The example of persons of such high rank, and who must be presumed to have had an education in some degree corresponding to their station, could not fail of operating upon men of a lower order in society. The carnage became every day more general, and more indiscriminate; and the murder of peasants at their houses, or while employed in their usual work in the fields, by the soldiers, was not only not reproved or punished, but deemed a meritorious service by their superiors." Chap. iii. p. 128-30.

dies away, so well calculated to keep alive a hatred of oppression, and a strong sense of the importance of religion!

There is extant a singular and affecting account of the death of one of these sufferers, written by Alexander Peden, an enthusiastic preacher of the Cameronian sect, which is rendered more striking by the rudeness of the narrative, and the minute circumstantiality of the details. This is one of the passages which we propose to take from this portion of our history; the other consists of some extracts relative to the sufferings and death of one of the most accomplished and discreet, as well as most pious, of the ministers who suffered during the persecution under the two last kings of the Stuart family. The former of these two, by name John Brown, was a small farmer and carrier, resident at Priesthill, in the parish of Muirkirk, an upland district on the borders of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire; "a man," says Wodrow, "of shining piety, who had great measures of solid digested knowledge and experience, and a singular talent of a most plain and affecting way of communicating his knowledge to others." This man was orderly, sedate, and discreet, and nowise obnoxious to the ruling party, except as a conscientious and inflexible seceder from the Episcopalian worship attempted to be imposed. Our tale is taken from a publication entitled the 'Life of Mr. Alexander Peden,' published about the year 1720*.

"In the beginning of May, 1685, he (Mr. Alexander Peden) came to the house of John Brown and

* The following passage, with other interesting particulars relative to these times, is to be found in Scott's 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.' It is hardly necessary to refer to 'Old Mortality,' as a most vivid and affecting picture of this interesting period of our history, though coloured by the author's prejudices in favour of the dominant party.

Marion Weir, whom he married before he went to Ireland, where he staid all night, and in the morning, when he took farewell, he came out of the door, saying to himself, 'Poor woman, a fearful morning,' twice over; 'A dark misty morning.' The next morning, between five and six hours, the said John Brown having performed the worship of God in his family, was going with a spade in his hand to make ready some peat ground: the mist being very dark, he knew not until cruel and bloody Claverhouse compassed him with three troops of horse, brought him to his house, and then examined him; who, though he was a man of a stammering speech, yet answered him distinctly and solidly; which made Claverhouse to examine those whom he had taken to be his guide through the muirs, if ever they heard him preach. They answered, No, no; he was never a preacher. He said, 'If he has not preached, mickle has he prayed in his time.' He said to John, 'Go to your prayers, for you shall immediately die.' When he was praying, Claverhouse interrupted him three times: one time that he stopt him, he was pleading that the Lord would spare a remnant, and not make a full end in the day of his anger. Claverhouse said, 'I gave you time to pray, and ye are begun to preach:' he turned about upon his knees and said, 'Sir, you know neither the nature of preaching or praying, that calls this preaching.' Then continued without confusion; when ended, Claverhouse said, 'Take good-night of your wife and children.' His wife standing by with her child in her arms that she had brought forth to him, and another child of his first wife's, he came to her, and said, 'Now, Marion, the day is come, that I told you would come when I first spake to you of marrying me.' She said, 'Indeed, John, I can willingly part with you.' 'Then,' he said, 'this is

all I desire, I have no more to do but to die.' He kissed his wife and bairns, and wished purchased and promised blessings to be multiplied upon them, and his blessing. Claverhouse ordered six soldiers to shoot him*: the most part of the bullets came upon his head, which scattered his brains on the ground. Claverhouse said to his wife, 'What thinkest thou of thy husband now, woman?' She said, 'I thought ever much of him, and now as much as ever.' He said, 'It were justice to lay thee beside him.' She said, 'If ye were permitted, I doubt not but that your cruelty would go that length; but how will ye make answer for this morning's work?' He said, 'to man I can be answerable; and for God, I will take him in my own hand.' Claverhouse mounted his horse, and marched, and left her with the corpse of her dead husband lying there; she set the bairn upon the ground, and gathered his brains, and tied up his head, and straighted his body, and covered him in her plaid, and sat down and wept over him. It being a very desolate place, where never verdure grew, and far from neighbours, it was some time before any friends came to her: the first that came was a very fit hand, that old singular Christian woman in the Cummerhead, named Elizabeth Menzies, three miles distant, who had been tried with the violent death of her husband at Pentland, afterwards of two worthy sons, Thomas Weir, who was killed at Drumclog, and David Steel, who was suddenly shot afterwards when taken. The said Marion Weir, sitting upon her husband's grave, told me, that before that, she could see no blood but what she was in danger to faint; and yet she was helped to be a witness to all this, without either fainting or confusion, except when the shots were let off, her eyes

* Wodrow says that the soldiers hesitated, or refused to fire, and that Claverhouse shot Brown with his own hands.

dazzled. His corpse was buried at the end of his house, where he was slain, with this inscription on his grave-stone:—

> In earth's cold bed, the dusty part here lies,
> Of one who did the earth as dust despise!
> Here, in this place, from earth he took departure;—
> Now he has got the garland of the martyr.

This murder was committed between six and seven in the morning: Mr. Peden was about ten or eleven miles distant, having been in the fields all night; he came to the house between seven and eight, and desired to call in the family, that he might pray amongst them. When praying, he said, 'Lord, when wilt thou avenge Brown's blood? Oh! let Brown's blood be precious in thy sight! and hasten the day when thou wilt avenge it, with Cameron's, Cargill's, and many others of our martyrs' names; and oh! for that day, when the Lord would avenge all their bloods.'

"When ended, John Muirhead inquired what he meant by Brown's blood? He said twice over, 'What do I mean? Claverhouse has been at the Priesthill this morning, and has cruelly murdered John Brown; his corpse was lying at the end of his house, and his poor wife sitting weeping by his corpse, and not a soul to speak a word comfortably to her.'"

It is not to be supposed that this atrocity was single or singular in its nature, or that it and others rest upon doubtful testimony. "No historical facts," says Mr. Fox, "are better ascertained than the account of these instances of cruelty which are to be found in Wodrow." And the extent to which they were carried, may be appreciated from the number of military executions or murders recorded by that

author*, in the two first months only of the year in which the above tragedy was enacted. Neither must it be supposed that these were the unwarranted excesses of a brutal soldiery: the Privy Council, the chief executive power of Scotland, clearly pointed out the line of conduct to be pursued in its instructions†;

* We give an abstract, to show both the number and nature of the crimes which were punished with death.

Jan. 23. Six persons shot, surprised in prayer, in the parish of Monigaff, Galloway.

Jan. 31. One person shot, taken in hiding, in Durisdeer, Nithsdale.

Jan. 31. Four shot, for refusing the oath of abjuration. Straiton, Ayrshire.

Feb. 19. Four shot and two hanged, taken in hiding. Orr, Galloway.

Feb. 21. Five killed at Kirkonnel.

Feb. 28. One killed at Barr, in Carrick.

Ten others killed in the above month, at different times, dates uncertain, facts certain. And so on, through the year, but especially the first half. All these, it will be observed, are military executions solely, not men slain in fighting, nor men condemned by the civil power. Wodrow, book iii. chap. 9. § 6.

† Instructions to General-Lieutenant Drummond, for marching to the southern and western shires. Edinb. April 21, 1685.

"1mo. You are to employ all his majesties standing forces, in the southern and western shires, or so many of them as you shall find expedient, for pursuing, suppressing, and utterly destroying all such fugitive rebels as resist, and disturb the peace and quiet of his majesties government: and you are to cause immediately shoot such of them to death, as you immediately find in arms.

"2do. You shall give order to apprehend all persons suspect for harbourers, or resetters of rebels, and fugitive vagabonds: and punish such as you find guilty, according to law."

He is farther warranted to take free quarters, for all persons under his command (not being of his majesties forces), in all places where rebels, and fugitives, and vagabonds are suspected of being reset, harboured, or connived at.

There is something at once ludicrous and revolting in the following complaint, and the remedy applied to the grievance. It is a good specimen of the way in which the Council exercised their inquisitorial functions:—

and in its dealings with the prisoners brought before it, showed equally clearly that the exceeding of their orders in severity would not be harshly construed. There are few who do not recollect the scene in 'Old Mortality,' in which the preacher Macbriar is examined before the Council and the fiction does go one step beyond the reality, as detailed in the authentic pages of Wodrow. Those who did not perish by shot or sword, had often reason to wish that their sufferings had been ended by the summary method of military execution. Torture was pitilessly used to extract confession, and branding, banishment, and hanging were largely employed not only against the violent spirits whom persecution had driven to assume arms, but against those who offered none but passive resistance. And this severity was the cause, not the consequence, of the more violent sects rising in arms. It was the result of a premeditated scheme to oppress, if not to root out, Presbyterianism, as tending to keep alive a spirit of independence, civil as well as religious. With this intent on the ministers and other prominent persons were first attacked under form of law; it was not until their firmness proved to be unexpugnable, that the act of assembling for worship was itself proscribed. Even so early as 1661, Mr James Guthrie, one of the most eminent ministers of the Scottish church, a man of moderation and discretion,

" July 14. The magistrates of Glasgow present a petition to the council, shewing that there is detected with many silly old women who meet at hedges to the town. The council order them to be whipped and burnt on the cheek severely who are guilty of reset and converse, and such as are guilty of all principles, that they be whipped and all dismissed. Wodrow, Hist. of Sufferings of Church of Scotland, vol. iii. chap. ix. § 3.

Reset and converse are the harbouring and intercourse with proscribed persons. *Guilty of all principles* is a piece of convenient latitude, but must be understood to signify free on to the kirk and covenant.

as well as zeal, learning and piety, was singled out as a victim. Hume's account of this transaction is a good specimen of the spirit in which he treats of this period of history. "It was deemed political to hold over men's heads for some time the terror of punishment, till they should have made the requisite compliances with the new government. Though neither the king's temper nor plan of administration led him to severity, some examples, after such a bloody and triumphant rebellion, seemed necessary; and the Marquis of Argyle and one Guthrie were pitched upon as the victims... Guthrie was a seditious preacher, and had personally affronted the king: his punishment gave surprise to nobody." On this passage, we have to observe, that Guthrie was not a person unknown or insignificant, to be spoken of thus contemptuously (*one Guthrie*); and in denial the latter statements, to quote the following extract from Wodrow, whose testimony we do not hesitate to prefer to that of Hume, neither quoting their authority. "The king himself was so sensible of his (Guthrie's) good services to him and his interest when at the lowest, and of the severity of this sentence, that when he got notice of it, he asked with some warmth, 'And what have you done with Mr. Patrick Gillespie?' It was answered that Mr. Gillespie had so many friends in the house, his life could not be taken. 'Well,' said the king, 'if I had known you would have spared Mr. Gillespie, I would have spared Mr. Guthrie.' And indeed there was reason for it, as to one who had been so firm and zealous a supporter of His Majestie's title and interest, and had suffered so much for his continued opposition to, and disowning of the English usurpation." And far from being an insignificant person, whose death might be passed over as a

* Wodrow, book 1. chap. 2. § 4.

matter of no account, the greatest pains were taken to induce him to save his life by * making concessions, with the value of which, as coming from him, the court party were well acquainted But his offence, and the reason for pursuing him to death are not obscurely hinted at in the first sentence of our extract from Hume he had stood up against invasion of the rights of the Presbyterian kirk, which the king, in swearing to the covenant had bound himself to uphold, and therefore he was made an example, "to hold over men's heads the terror of punishment, till they should have made the requisite compliances with the new government" The charge against him was treason and sedition, founded principally on the language of a petition adopted by a meeting of ministers, August 23, 1660, of which he was one, and on two publications, the 'Western Remonstrance,' and 'Causes of God's Wrath,' in the sentiments of both of which he expressed his concurrence on his trial: and in his last speech he acknowledged himself the author of the latter From one of his speeches before the parliament, we extract the following passage, which is worth the attention of those who think that opinions are to be stifled by violence

"My lord, my conscience I cannot submit, but this old crazy body and mortal flesh I do submit, to do with it whatsoever you will, whether by death, or banishment, or imprisonment, or anything else; only I beseech you to ponder well what profit there

* Burnet says, "he was no advantage to those that wished to have saved him, by the least step towards any submission, but much to the contrary I saw him after He was so far from showing any fear that he rather expressed a contempt of death. He spoke an hour on the ladder with the composedness of one that was delivering a sermon, rather than his last words He justified all that had been done, and exhorted all people to adhere to the covenant, which he magnified highly." Burnet, Hist. of his own times.

is in my blood: it is not the extinguishing of me or many others that will extinguish the covenant and work of reformation since the year 1638. My blood, bondage, or banishment will contribute more for the propagation of those things than my life or liberty could do, though I should live many years*."

His death, however, was resolved on; and in spite of the vigour of his defence, and the laxness of the charges against him, on which no lawyer since the Revolution would have dared to build a charge of constructive treason, he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged; which sentence was carried into effect, June 1, 1661. He commenced his dying speech in these words:—

"Men and brethren, I fear many of you are come hither to gaze, rather than to be edified by the carriage and last words of a dying man; but if any have an ear to hear, as I hope some of this great confluence have, I desire your audience to a few words. I am come hither to lay down this earthly tabernacle and mortal flesh of mine, and, I bless God, through his grace, I do it willingly, and not by constraint. I say, I suffer willingly: if I had been so minded, I might have made a division, and not been a prisoner; but being conscious to myself of nothing worthy of death or bonds, I could not stain my innocency with the suspicion of guiltiness, by my withdrawing; neither have I wanted opportunities and advantages to escape since I was prisoner,—not by the fault of my keepers, God knoweth, but otherwise; but neither for this had I light or liberty, lest I should reflect upon the Lord's name, and offend the generation of the righteous: and if some men have not been mistaken, or dealt deceitfully in telling me so, I might have avoided not only the severity of the sentence, but also had much favour and coun-

* Wodrow, book i. chap. 2.

tenance in complying with the courses of the times. But I durst not redeem my life with the loss of my integrity, God knoweth I durst not; and that since I was prisoner, he hath so holden me by the hand, that he never suffered me to bring it in debate in my inward thoughts, much less to propose or hearken to any overture of that kind. I did judge it better to suffer than to sin; and therefore I am come hither to lay down my life this day."

He proceeded to justify his own loyalty, and the conduct for which he was condemned, as in no way treasonable or seditious, but a conscientious upholding of the rights and privileges of the church: and bearing testimony to the sacredness of the Covenant, and to his own adherence to it, and to the doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian church, he concluded in an exalted strain of piety and thankfulness, and met his death, according to the testimony of Burnet, above quoted, with the utmost tranquillity.

"It was very confidently asserted at this time, that some weeks after Mr. Guthrie's head had been set up on the Netherbow Port in Edinburgh, the commissioner's coach coming down that way, several drops of blood fell from the head upon the coach, which all their art and diligence could not wipe off. I have it very confidently affirmed, that physicians were called, and inquired if any natural cause could be assigned for the blood dropping so long after the head was put up, and especially for it not washing out of the leather; and they could give none. This odd incident beginning to be talked of, and all other methods being tried, at length the leather was removed, and a new cover put on: this was much sooner done than the wiping off the guilt of this great and good man's blood from the shedders of it, and this poor nation. The above report I shall say no more of; it was generally spoken of at the time,

and is yet firmly believed by many: at this distance I cannot fully vouch it as certain; perhaps it may be thought too miraculous for the age we are now in: but this I will affirm, that Mr. Guthrie's blood was of so crying a nature, that even Sir George Mackenzie was sensible that all his rhetoric, though he was a great master in that sort, had not been sufficient to drown it, for which cause he very wisely passed it over in silence*."

This is rather a remarkable instance of a common superstition. The reader who will consult the original authorities, will be struck by the elevated tone of joyful anticipation with which the sufferers of this period almost uniformly met death. See the accounts of King, Mackail, Renwick, and many others. Compare these deaths with those of Socrates or Cato, and we have the best exemplification of the practical difference between Christianity and Heathenism, even in its purest forms. "The Heathen looked on death without fear, the Christian exulted †."

The English reader will naturally look in a chapter devoted to the subjects by which this is occupied, for some account of the persecution of the reformed church of his own country in the reign of Mary. This is a period very different in character from that persecution of the Scottish Presbyterians, which we have just described, but not inferior in interest. Their stubborn opposition for conscience' sake is well contrasted by the mild submission of the English reformers for conscience' sake also; as the ascetic lives, and in many cases the stern and gloomy tenets of the former are contrasted with the innocent and decent cheerfulness, and more attractive doctrines, encouraged, practised, and preached, by the latter. These differences may be explained by various causes, arising from a dif-

* Wodrow, book i. chap. 2. † Last Days of Pompeii.

ference of national character and natural circumstances. The Scotch have always been a people not lightly moved, but stern in temper, and stubborn in endurance when roused into action: and their wild country and defensible fastnesses rendered it easy, in the first instance, to withdraw from vexatious interference, in the second, when pursued, to oppose violence successfully. And besides, the resolute resistance of the Cameronians and others was the fruit of a spirit of independence of long growth, fostered by long contests with the crown, both in England and Scotland; and the civil wars had effectually broken down the notion, that it was forbidden to take up arms, even for conscience' sake, against the powers that be. That their conduct, if not always judicious, was in its main principles worthy of honour and admiration, we have already stated to be our opinion: but we are not on that account less ready to admire the calm submission of the English reformers, coupled with their resolute upholding of the truth. The Scottish zealots had studied the Old Testament, till they had imbibed rather too much of the Jewish temper: the conduct of the fathers of our church was full of the very spirit of Christianity. The latter were not more distinguished than the former for uprightness of life, devotion to the truth, as they received it, or readiness to seal their adherence to it by death. But they had the advantage in depth of learning, in a more temperate gravity of conduct, and soundness of judgment: and it is on these accounts, as well as by reason of the more eminent station which they filled in the eyes of the world, that they have always been reverenced as shining lights; while the persecuted sects of Scotland were long regarded by those who were but generally acquainted with that period of our history, either with hatred, or contempt, in proportion as the cruel extravagancies

of a few, or the so-called moroseness, and puritanical precision of the many, made most impression.

The stories of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, and others high in rank, are familiarly known even to children; in whose limited circle of historical reading the horrors of this period have been suffered to hold too prominent a place. Less known to fame, yet not inferior to any, it should seem, in the qualities of the heart and the understanding, was he whose memorable death we have selected for narration; and in whose rustic simplicity of deportment, and somewhat coarse jocularity, and grotesque contour of person (a circumstance which is to be inferred from various parts of the narrative), we trace a resemblance, slight, and unimportant, yet not uninteresting, to the Athenian philosopher, as well as in his care, retained to the last, for the feelings and welfare of his friends, and his resolute refusal to compromise the goodness of his cause by flight.

"Of Rowland Taylor (says Bishop Heber) neither the name nor the misfortunes are obscure. He was distinguished among the divines of the Reformation for his abilities, his learning, and piety: and he suffered death at the stake on Aldham Common, near Hadleigh, in the third year of Queen Mary, amid the blessings and lamentations of his parishioners, and with a courageous and kindly cheerfulness which has scarcely its parallel, even in those days of religious heroism."

"There is nothing indeed more beautiful, in the whole beautiful Book of Martyrs, than the account which Fox has given of Rowland Taylor, whether in the discharge of his duty as a parish priest, or in the more arduous moments when he was called on to bear his cross in the cause of religion. His warmth of heart, his simplicity of manners, the total absence of the false stimulants of enthusiasm or pride, and

the abundant overflow of better and holier feelings are delineated, no less than his courage in death, and the buoyant cheerfulness with which he encountered it, with a spirit only inferior to the eloquence and dignity of the Phædon. Something, indeed, must be allowed for the manners of the age, before we can be reconciled to the coarse vigour of his pleasantry, his jocose menace to Bonner, and his jests with the Sheriff on his own stature and corpulency. But nothing can be more delightfully told than his refusal to fly from the Lord Chancellor's officers; his dignified yet modest determination to await death in the discharge of his duty; and his affectionate and courageous parting with his wife and children. His recollection, when led to the stake, of 'the blind man and woman,' his pensioners, is of the same delightful character; nor has Plato anything more touching than the lamentation of his parishioners over his dishonoured head and long white beard, and his own meek rebuke to the wretch who drew blood from that venerable countenance. Let not my readers blame me for this digression. They will have cause to thank me, if it induces them to refer to a history which few men have ever read without its making them 'sadder and better.'*

Rowland Taylor, "a right perfect divine," and parish priest, according to the manners of the time, was chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer; but on being appointed rector of Hadleigh, a small town in Suffolk, he quitted his patron's family, to devote himself entirely to the care of his living; and by his diligent study, and preaching, and attention to the temporal as well as spiritual welfare of his people, he both recommended the doctrines which he taught, and acquired the esteem and love of his parishioners in an

* Heber's 'Life of Bishop Taylor,' the worthy descendant of this excellent man.

uncommon degree. Such was his occupation and character during the reign of Edward VI.: on the accession of Mary, he was one of the first to suffer for his adherence to the church and to the laws, in consequence of his resistance to the attempts made to reinstate Popish priests and Popish ceremonies in the parochial churches. In this scheme to reconcile England to the Pope, the renegade Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and the brutal and ferocious Bonner, Bishop of London, who figure prominently in the following narrative, were the most zealous actors. The length and prolix style of the original forbids us to extract the entire story from the Book of Martyrs; but we shall adhere to it as closely as we can, as well for the sake of giving (according to the principle laid down in our introduction) a specimen of the style of that remarkable work, as for the characteristic touches and intrinsic beauty of a great part of the narration. It begins with an account of Taylor's character and parochial labours up to the death of Edward VI., and the subsequent attempts of his sister and successor Mary, to restore, by violence, the supremacy of the Roman Catholic religion.

"In the beginning of this rage of Antichrist (1553), a certain petie gentleman, after the sort of a lawyer, called Foster, a bitter persecutor in those days, with one John Clerk, of Hadley, conspired to bring in the Pope and his maumetrie* again into Hadley Church. To this purpose they builded up, with all haste possible

* By a singular specimen of ignorance, our ancestors, who held the Mahometans in pious abomination, chose to consider that sect, which holds images in abomination, as idolaters. Hence the words mawmet, or maumet, and maumetry, are continually used in our early writers, for idol, and idolatry. "Unleful worschipping of mawmetis." Wiclif. 1 Pet. iv. 3. When the "Byshop Amphiarax sodeynly fell down into hell," according to Lydgate, Story of Thebes, it was the

"Mede of ydolatrie,
Of rightes olde, and false mammentrye."—*Caxton's edition.*

the altar, intending to bring in their masse againe, about the Palme Sunday. But this their device took none effect; for in the night the altar was beaten down; wherefore they built it up againe the second time, and laid diligent watch, lest any should againe break it down.

"On the day following came Foster and John Clerk, bringing with them their Popish sacrificer, who brought with him all his implements and garments to play his Popish pageant, whom they and their men guarded with swords and bucklers, lest any man should disturbe him in his missall sacrifice.

"When Dr. Taylor, who (according to his custome) sat at his booke studying the word of God, heard the bels ring, hee arose, and went into the church, supposing something had been there to be done, according to his pastorall office: and coming to the church, he found the church doores shut, and fast barred, saving the chancel doore, which was only latched; where he entring, and comming into the chancell, saw a Popish sacrificer in his robes, with a broad new shaven crown, ready to begin his Popish sacrifice, beset about with drawn swords and bucklers, lest any man should approach to disturbe him.

"Then said Dr. Taylor, 'Thou divell, who made thee so bold to enter into this church of Christ, to prophane and defile it with this abominable idolatry?' With that start up Foster, and, with an ireful and furious countenance, said to Dr. Taylor, 'Thou traitor, what doest thou here, to let and disturb the Queene's proceedings?' Dr. Taylor answered, 'I am no traitor, but I am the shepherd that God, my Lord Christ, hath appointed to feed this his flock; wherefore I have good authority to bee here, and I command thee, thou Popish wolf, in the name of God, to avoid hence, and not to presume here with such Popish idolatry to poison Christ's flock.'"

Taylor being violently put out of the church, the mass was continued. But he was a man to be feared for his integrity, courage, and ability, and therefore to be destroyed: and in those times the transaction which we have just related, furnished means of proceeding against him under colour of law. In a few days, upon complaint of Clerk and Foster, he was cited to appear before Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor. "When his friends heard this, they earnestly counselled him to depart and flye; alledging and declaring unto him, that he could neither be indifferently heard to speak his conscience and mind, nor yet look for justice or favour at the said Chancellor's hands, who, as it was well knowne, was most fierce and cruell; but must needs (if he went up to him) wait for imprisonment and cruell death at his hands."

"Then said Dr. Taylor to his friends, 'Dear friends, I most heartily thank you that you have so tender a care over mee; and although I know that there is neither justice nor truth to be looked for at my adversarie's hands, but rather imprisonment and cruell death, yet I know my cause to be so good and righteous, and the truth so strong on my side, that I will, by God's grace, go and appear before them, and to their beards resist their false doings.'"

In this mind, though strongly urged to fly, he continued, and took his journey to London on horseback, with a trusty servant named John Hull, who on the way "laboured to counsel and perswade him very earnestly to fly, and not to come to the Bishop; and proffered himselfe to go with him to save him, and in all perils to venture his life for him and with him. But in no wise would Dr. Taylor consent or agree thereunto. Thus they came up to London, and shortly after, Taylor presented himself before the Bishop of Winchester."

The account of this conference is amusing as well

as interesting, but it is both too long and too theological to extract. Taylor, however, according to the reporter, had altogether the best of it, except in the conclusion, which was effected by what Fox, in his marginal note, quaintly calls "Winchester's strong argument, Carry him to prison." He remained in the King's Bench about a year and three-quarters, "in the which time the Papists got certain old tyrannous lawes, which were put down by King Henry VIII. and by King Edward, to be revived again by Parliament, so that now they might, *ex officio*, cite whom they would upon their owne suspition, and charge him with what articles they lusted, and, except they in all things agreed to their purpose, burne them. When these laws were once established, they sent for Dr. Taylor, with certain other prisoners, which were againe convened before the Chancellor, and other Commissioners, about the 22d of January, 1555. The purport and effect of which talke between them, because it is sufficiently described by himselfe in his owne letter, written to a friend of his, I have annexed the said letter here under, as followeth *.... After

* The principal question argued in this letter, is the marriage of priests. The following extract, which is of Taylor's own writing, gives a good notion of the way in which such examinations might be carried on:—

"Then my Lord Chancellor said, 'Diddest thou never read the book that I set forth of the sacrament?' I answered, 'That I had read it.' Then hee said, 'How likest thou that book?' With that one of the Councell (whose name I know not)[1], said, 'My Lord, that is a good question, for I am sure that book stoppeth all their mouths.' Then said I, 'My Lord, I think many things be farre wide of the truth of God's word in that book.'

"Then my Lord said, 'Thou art a very varlet.' To that I answered, 'That is as bad as Racha, or Fatue[2].' Then my Lord said, 'Thou art an ignorant beetlebrow.'

[1] "His right name might bee, Sir John Clawbacke."—Fox's marginal note.

[2] Taylor had once before twitted the Bishop with his turn for calling hard names.

that Dr. Taylor thus, with great spirit and courage, had answered for himselfe, and stoutly rebuked his adversaries for breaking their oath made before to King Henry, and to King Edward his sonne, and for betraying the realme into the power of the Roman Bishop; they, perceiving that in no case could he be stirred to their wils and purpose, committed him thereupon to prison againe, where he endured till the last of January."

On that day he was again brought before Winchester and other bishops, and condemned to death. Being a priest, however, he was to be degraded before he was delivered to the civil power, and Bonner was appointed to perform that office. "Well," quoth

"To that I answered, 'I have read over and over again the Holy Scriptures, and St. Augustine's works through, and Cyprian, Eusebius, Origene, Gregory Nazianzene, with divers other books through once; therefore I thank God, I am not utterly ignorant. Besides these, my Lord, I professed the Civill Laws, as your Lordship did, and I have read over the Canon Law also.'

"Then my Lord said, 'with a corrupt judgment thou readest all things. Touching my profession, it is divinity, in which I have written diverse bookes.' 'Then,' said I, 'My Lord, ye did write one booke, *De vera obedientia;* I would ye had been constant in that: for indeed ye did never declare a good conscience, that I heard of, but in that one booke.'

"Then my Lord said, 'Tut, tut, tut, I wrote against Bucer in Priests' mariages; but such bookes please not such wretches as thou art, which hast been maried many yeares.'

"To that I answered, 'I am maried indeed, and I have had nine children in holy matrimony, I thank God: and this I am sure of, that your proceedings now at present in this realme, against Priests' mariages, is the maintenance of the doctrine of divells, against naturall law, civill law, canon law, generall councells, canons of the Apostles, ancient Doctors, and God's lawes.'

"Then my Lord Chancellor said, 'Thou falsifiest the generall councell; for there is express mention in the said decree, that Priests should be divorced from their wives, which be maried.'

"'Then,' said I, 'if those words be there, as you say, then am I content to lose this great head of mine. Let the book be fetched.'"

the Bishop, "I am come to degrade you; wherefore put on these vestures *." "No," quoth Dr. Taylor, "I will not." "Wilt thou not?" said the Bishop. "I shall make thee, ere I go." Quoth Dr. Taylor, "You shall not, by the grace of God." Then he charged him upon his obedience to do it; but he would not do it for him.

"So he willed another to put them on his backe; and when he was thoroughly furnished therewith, he set his hands to his side, walking up and down, and said, 'How say you, my Lord, am I not a goodly foole? How say you, my Masters? If I were in Cheape, should I not have boyes enow to laugh at these apish toyes and toying trumpery?' So the Bishop scraped his fingers, thumbes, and the crowne of his head, and did the rest of such like divellish observances.

"At the last, when he should have given Dr. Taylor a stroke on the breast with his crosier-staffe, the Bishop's Chaplain said, 'My Lord, strike him not, for he will sure strike againe.' 'Yea, by St. Peter, will I,' quoth Dr. Taylor, 'the cause is Christ's, and I were no good Christian if I would not fight in my Master's quarrell.' So the Bishop laid his curse on him, but struck him not. . . . And when hee came up, he told Master Bradford (for then both lay in one chamber) that he had made the Bishop of London afraid: 'for,' saith he laughingly, 'his Chaplain gave him counsell not to strike me with his crosier-staffe, for that I would strike againe; and, by my troth, said he, rubbing his hands, I made him believe I would doe so indeed.'"

* The garments of a Roman Catholic priest, which were to be put on that he might be stripped of them, and thus symbolically deprived of his pastoral office. The scraping mentioned below was performed on the parts which were anointed in the Roman Ritual of ordination.

After this ceremony he was delivered to the secular power. His last interview with his family is thus simply told. "Now when the Sheriffe and his company came against St. Botolph church (in Aldgate), Elizabeth cried, saying, 'O my deare Father! Mother, Mother, here is my father led away.' Then cried his wife, 'Rowland, Rowland, where art thou?' for it was a verie darke morning, that the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor answered, 'Deare wife, I am here,' and staied. The Sheriffe's men would have led him forth, but the Sheriffe said, 'Stay a little, maisters, I praie you, and let him speake to his wife;' and so they staied.

"Then came she to him; and he tooke his daughter Mary in his armes, and he, his wife, and Elizabeth, kneeled down and said the Lord's Praier: at which sight the Sheriffe wept apace, and so did divers other of the company. After they had praied, he rose up and kissed his wife, and shooke her by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, my deare wife, bee of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience. God shall stir up a father for my children.' And then he kissed his daughter Mary, and said, 'God blesse thee, and make thee his servant:' and kissing Elizabeth, hee said, 'God blesse thee, I praie you all stand strong and stedfast unto Christ and his worde, and keep you from idolatry.' Then said his wife, 'God be with thee, dear Rowland. I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadley.'

"And so he was led forth to the Woolsack.. And at his comming out, John Hull before spoken of stood at the raile with Dr. Taylor's sonne. When Dr. Taylor saw them, he called them, saying, 'Come hither, my sonne Thomas;' and John Hull lifted up the child, and set him on the horse before his father: Then lifted he up his eyes toward heaven, and praied for his sonne, laide his hatte on the child's head, and

blessed him, and so delivered the child to John Hull, whom he tooke by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, John Hull, the faithfullest servant that ever man had.' And so they rode forth: the Sheriffe of Essex, with foure yeomen of the guard, and the Sheriffe's men leading him."

He was thus conducted to Hadley, in the neighbourhood of which was appointed the place of his execution, at Aldham Moor. The even and cheerful tenour of his mind is evinced in many points of our past narrative, and confirmed by witnesses. "They that were present, and familiarly conversant with this Dr. Taylor, reported of him that they never did see in him any feare of death; but especially and above all the rest, which besides him suffered at the same time, always shewed himselfe merry and cheerfull in time of his imprisonment, as well before his condemnation as after: he kept one countenance and like behaviour. Whereunto he was rather confirmed by the company and presence of Mr. John Bradford, who then was in prison and chamber with him. The same morning, when he was called up by the Sheriffe to go to his burning, he cast his armes about a balk which was in the chamber between Mr. Bradford's bed and his; and there hanging by the hands, said to Mr. Bradford, 'O, Mr. Bradford,' said he, 'what a notable sway should I give if I were hanged,' meaning for that he was a corpulent and big man." His unusual stature seems to have been a favourite subject for jesting with him; for we find a very elaborate piece of quizzing on the same subject, approximating in character to that species of wit which is sometimes denominated *trotting*. It runs thus:—

"At Chelmsford, the Sheriff of Essex, being about to deliver up his prisoner to the Sheriff of Suffolk, sought, as they sat at supper, to induce him to recant. After using the common topics, he concludes, 'Ye

should do much better to revoke your opinions, and return to the Catholike church of Rome; if ye will, doubt ye not but ye shall find favour at the Queene's hands. This councell I give you, good Mr. Doctor of a good heart, and good will toward you; and thereupon I drink to you. In like manner said all the Yeomen of the Guard. Upon that condition, Mr. Doctor, we will all drink to you.'

"When they had all drunk to him, and the cup was come to him, he stayed a little, as one studying what answer he might give. At the last thus he answered, and said, 'Master Sheriffe, and my masters all, I heartily thank you for your good will; I have hearkened to your words, and marked well your counsels; and, to be plain with you, I do perceive that I have been deceived myself, and am likely to deceive a great many of Hadley of their expectation.' With that word they all rejoiced. 'Yea, good Master Doctor,' quoth the Sheriffe, 'God's blessing on your heart, hold you there still. It is the comfortablest word that we heard you speak yet. What, should ye cast yourself away in vaine: play a wise man's part, and I dare warrant it, ye shall finde favour.' Thus they rejoiced very much at the word, and were very merry.

"At the last, 'Good Master Doctor,' quoth the Sheriffe, 'what meane ye by this, that ye said ye think ye have been deceived yourselfe, and think ye shall deceive many one in Hadley?' 'Would ye know my meaning plainly?' quoth he. 'Yea,' quoth the Sheriffe, 'good Master Doctor, tell it us plainly.'

"'Then,' said Dr. Taylor, 'I will tell you how I have been deceived, and, as I think, I shall deceive a great many more: I am, as you see, a man that has a very great carkasse, which I thought should have been buried in Hadley church-yard, if I had died in my bed, as I well hoped I should have done; but herein I see I was deceived: and there are a great

number of wormes in Hadley church-yard, which should have had jolly feeding on this carrion; which they have looked for many a day. But now I know we be deceived, both I and they; for this carkasse must be burnt to ashes, and so shall they lose their bait and feeding, that they looked to have had of it.'

"When the Sheriffe and his company heard him say so, they were amazed, and looked one on another, marvelling at the man's constant minde, that thus without all feare made a jest of the cruell torment, and death now at hand prepared for him. Thus was their expectation clean disappointed. And in this appeareth what was his meditation in his chiefest wealth and prosperity, namely, that he should shortly die, and feed wormes in his grave; which meditation, if all our Bishops and spirituall men had used, they had not, for a little worldly glory, forsaken the word of God and truth which they in King Edward's days had preached and set forth, nor yet to maintain the Bishop of Rome's authority, have committed to the fire so many as they did.'

"At Lavenham, a small town near Bury, where the cavalcade remained two days, the attempts to induce him to recant were renewed by the Sheriff and gentlemen of the county, of whom there was a great concourse, with the promise even of promotion to a bishopric. On the 8th of February he was brought out to complete his earthly journey. The same spirit animated him to the end. On the way, being alighted from his horse, 'he leapt, and fet a friske or twaine,' as men commonly do in dauncing. 'Why, Master Doctor,' quoth the Sheriffe, 'how do you now?' He answered, 'Well, God be praised, good Master Sheriffe, never better; for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my father's house; but, Master Sheriffe,' said he, 'shall we not go thorow Hadley?' 'Yes,'

quoth the Sheriffe, 'you shall go thorow Hadley.' 'Then,' said he, 'O good Lord, I thank thee, I shall yet once again, ere I die, see my flock, whom thou, Lord, knowest I have most heartily loved, and truly taught.'

"This wish being gratified, his last hours were soothed by the accents which of all must have been most grateful, the prayers and blessings of the poor, to whom he had been as a father in the relieving of their corporeal wants. The street of Hadley was lined with those who invoked succour and strength for him, mingled with exclamations of woe at the grievous loss which had befallen themselves. Nor in his own extremity did he forget the humblest and most needy of those who had been objects of his care: but stopping by the alms-houses, he cast out of a glove to the inmates of them such money as remained of what charitable persons had given for his support in prison (his benefices being sequestrated): and missing two of them, he asked, 'Is the blind man and blind woman that dwelt here alive?' He was answered, 'Yea, they are there within.' Then threw he glove and all in at the window, and so rode forth. Thus this good father and provider for the poore took his leave of those, for whom all his life he had a singular care and studie.

"At the last, comming to Aldham Common, the place assigned where he should suffer, and seeing a great multitude of people gathered together, he asked, 'What place is this; and what meaneth it that so much people are gathered hither?' It was answered, 'It is Aldham Common, the place where you must suffer; and the people are come to looke upon you.' 'Then,' said he, 'thanked be God, I am even at home;' and so light from his horse, and with both his hands rent the hood from his head.

"Now was his head notted evil favouredly, and

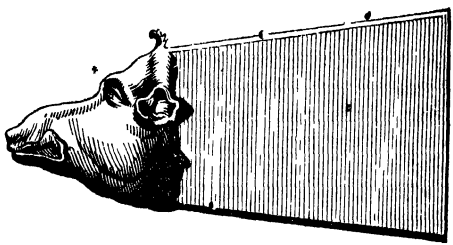
clipped much like as a man would clip a foole's head, which cost the good Bishop Bonner had bestowed upon him when he degraded him. But when the people saw his reverend and ancient face with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping teares, and cried, saying, 'God save thee, Good Doctor Taylor!' with such other like godly wishes. Then would hee have spoken to the people, but the yeomen of the guard were so busie about him, that as soon as he opened his mouth, one or other thrust a tippestaff into his mouth, and would in nowise permit him to speak.

"As they were piling the faggots, one Warwick cruelly cast a faggot at him, which light on his head and broke his face, that the bloud ran down his visage. Then said Dr. Taylor, 'O friend, I have harme enough, what needed that?'"

Here we take leave of him; for it is needless again to enter into the revolting details of the barbarous method of execution, especially prescribed for errors in matters of faith. The affection borne towards him was beautifully manifested in a poor woman, who knelt at the stake to join in his prayers, and could not be driven away by threats or fear. His last moments were like his life, tranquil, fearless, and forgiving.

Here, for the present at all events, we close this work. We have now traced the Grecian nation from the outset of authentic history to the period of its utmost greatness in arms, arts, and letters: and in doing so, according to the plan laid down in our introduction, we hope to have accumulated a mass of historical anecdotes, which, independent of their intrinsic beauty or interest, may possess a farther value, as tending to throw some light one on another.

Like the close of the Persian war, the close of the Peloponnesian war is a remarkable epoch: the former marks the beginning of the greatness, the latter the beginning of the decline of Greece. From thenceforward the history of Greece becomes more complicated, and our authorities less satisfactory; inasmuch as, at the close of Xenophon's Hellenics, we lose that series of admirable contemporary writers who have hitherto guided us; and the late compilers, such as Diodorus and Plutarch, make no adequate amends for the loss. The study, therefore, of the succeeding portion of history becomes less agreeable and more difficult: at the same time there is no want of remarkable incidents; for if the annals of Athens and Sparta become less important, the rise of Thebes to its short-lived power, the sudden growth of Thessaly under Jason of Pheræ, of Macedonia under Philip, and, above all, the renovation of the old Grecian spirit in the Achæan league, would supply abundance to fill a third volume, which should bring down the history of Greece to its final absorption into the Roman empire. But other employments leave the author no leisure at present for the collection of an adequate variety of materials from modern history: and, rather than pledge himself or the Society to the continuance of the work at an indefinite future time, he here takes his leave, in hope that if a third volume ever should appear, it will not be unacceptable to those who have already followed him thus far.



Prow of an ancient vessel found at Genoa.

CHAPTER VII.

Sketch of the interval which elapsed between the defeat in Sicily, and the battle of Arginusæ—Battle of Arginusæ—Prosecution and death of the Athenian generals—Massacre of the De Witts—End of the Peloponnesian war.

THE catastrophe of the Sicilian army was heard at Athens with consternation. In that army, besides light-armed troops and slaves, 10,000 citizens were lost, the flower of the republic and its allied, or rather dependent states; and the private sorrow from which few houses were exempt, was increased by the alarming perplexity how such another force could be raised from the exhausted population, or such a fleet rebuilt from the exhausted treasury of the state. It was generally believed through Greece that the war would soon come to an end; and if Sparta had been prepared to follow up with energy the blow struck in Sicily, Athens probably would have fallen. But though the

project of wresting the dominion of the sea from her seemed no longer visionary, as it had seemed earlier in the war, in which case, deprived both of her territories at home and of her commerce and allies abroad, she must have yielded, the Lacedæmonians at this critical juncture possessed no fleet, and the autumn and winter, which they spent in collecting one, were diligently employed by the Athenians in measures suited to the present emergency. Thus at the close of the nineteenth year of the war, each party, says Thucydides, seemed as it were preparing for the beginning of a war. But at this time a third party appeared in the contest. The king of Persia had discovered that to supply the Greeks with the means of mutual destruction, was much better policy than uniting them against himself by measures of open hostility; and Athens, from its restless spirit, as well as from the recollection of former injuries, was the object of especial dislike and fear to that monarchy. From henceforward the want of a public revenue, which had more than any thing cramped the exertions of Sparta, was obviated from the inexhaustible riches of Persia.

The seven years which elapsed between the defeat in Sicily and the battle of Arginusæ, are perhaps the busiest and most curious portion of the war. Scarce two years passed before the hope of supplanting the Lacedæmonians in the favour of Tissaphernes, satrap of Lydia, and diverting to themselves the wealth which was animating their enemies, induced the once proud people of Athens to divest themselves of the sovereignty and establish an oligarchical government. After a short existence of four months this government was overthrown, and a new one established, in which the supreme power was vested in an assembly of 5000 citizens, of which all persons entitled to serve in the heavy-armed infantry were constituted members. "And now for the first time in my remem-

brance," says Thucydides, "the Athenians appear to have possessed a government of unusual excellence; for there was a moderate intermixture of the few and the many. And this, after so many misfortunes past, first made the city again to raise its head*." Alcibiades, who had been a main promoter of this counter-revolution, was now recalled, and under his able guidance a series of victories ensued which bade fair to raise the commonwealth to its former splendour. In the twenty-fourth year of the war, and the sixth from his banishment, he led home his victorious troops, and was received with extraordinary favour, being appointed commander-in-chief, with greater powers than had ever been intrusted to such an officer. But the Athenians had not yet learnt steadiness. Within less than a year he was dismissed, in consequence of an unimportant defeat sustained by one of his subordinates, who, during his absence from the fleet, against express orders, had ventured a battle; and command was given to a board of ten generals, with Conon at their head.

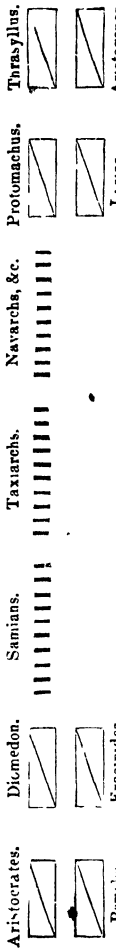
In the twenty-fifth year of the war, as Conon was passing Lesbos with a fleet of seventy triremes, the Spartan general, Callicratidas, obtained an opportunity of attacking him with far superior forces, compelled him to run for the harbour of Mitylene, took thirty of his ships, and formed the siege of that town by land and sea. When this unpleasant news reached Athens, every nerve was strained to effect their general's deliverance. In thirty days, 110 triremes were equipped and manned, though 20,000 men are calculated to have been required for the purpose. All persons of military age, both slaves and freemen, were pressed into the service; many knights even, who were legally exempted from this service, went on board. The fleet was increased by forty

* Thucyd. viii. 97.

ships or more from different allies, and then sailed for Mitylene to deliver Conon.

When Callicratidas heard that the Athenian fleet was at Samos, he left fifty ships, commanded by Eteonicus, to maintain the siege, and put to sea himself with 120. The Athenians spent that night at Arginusæ, a cluster of islands between the southern promontory of Lesbos and the mainland. In the morning both parties put to sea: eight of the ten Athenian generals were on board the fleet.

Xenophon tells us that the superiority in sailing, or rather rowing, which had enabled the Athenians at the commencement of the war to gain such distinguished successes under the command of Phormion and others was now reversed: and that from the greater swiftness of their ships, the Lacedæmonians were more likely to profit by the rapid evolutions, in which the naval science of that time was shown; especially that called the diecplus, which seems to have consisted in dashing through the enemies' line, avoiding the direct shock of his beak, but sweeping away his oars if possible by an oblique attack. To guard against this danger the Athenians adopted the following disposition of their fleet: in either wing were four squadrons, each of fifteen ships, and each commanded by one of the generals, eight of whom were on board the fleet, drawn up in a double line. The left of the centre was held by ten Samian ships; then came ten Athenian ships, each containing a military officer of rank, called taxiarch, which seems to correspond in grade most closely to the rank of colonel; next to them, each in his own ship, three navarchs or admirals, two of whom, Thrasybulus and Theramenes, are names well known in the history of the time, and the few allied ships, which were not elsewhere stationed. All these were in single line. We have



here a good illustration of the close connection between the military and naval service, and may infer that officers of distinction in the one were not expected to serve in inferior situations in the other. The distribution of the fleet will be more readily understood from the annexed diagram:—

The Lacedæmonian fleet was formed in a single line.

Hermon of Megara, the pilot, or master rather of Callicratidas's ship, observed that the Athenians were much the most numerous, and said that it would be well to retreat. Callicratidas answered, that Sparta would not be worse inhabited if he were dead, but it was shameful to run away. The battle lasted long: but when Callicratidas, who led the Spartan right wing, was thrown overboard by the shock of his own trireme against another, and the Athenian right wing gained the advantage over their opponents, the Spartan fleet betook itself to flight, with the loss of seventy ships or upwards. The victors returned to their station at Arginusæ, their number diminished only by twenty-five ships, but nearly all the crews of these had perished.

A double duty now claimed their attention: the one to save those of their countrymen who still clung to life upon the floating wreck, the other to relieve Conon and complete the destruction of the Peloponnesian fleet, by surprising the squadron left to maintain the siege of Mitylene. We can detect no error in

the course adopted, which was to leave forty-six ships to collect the wreck, and sail direct for Mitylene with the others. For some unexplained reason, however, none of the eight generals remained to superintend the former service, which was intrusted to Theramenes and Thrasybulus. But a violent storm came on, and confined both divisions of the fleet at Arginusæ; while Eteonicus, to whom a light vessel had conveyed the news of his commander's defeat, seized the interval for escape thus granted to him with much readiness. Fearful of attack from Conon, now nearly equal to him in naval force, if he manifested the necessity of retreat, he bade the vessel which conveyed the news put back to sea without communicating it to any but himself; and then return crowned and decked with the symbols of victory, and shouting that Callicratidas had gotten the victory of the Athenians. He then offered the usual thanks-offering for good news, and that very night broke up the siege and departed. The Athenians seem to have been deficient in activity, for their first information of this was derived from the arrival of Conon at Arginusæ, as they were preparing to leave it. They then sailed to Chios, whither the Peloponnesians had repaired; and having done nothing, returned to their usual station at Samos.

How it happened that so powerful a fleet, under able commanders, not only did, but apparently attempted nothing, in prosecution of so signal a success, is left entirely unexplained; and we might almost suspect from the meagre statement of facts, without explanation or comment, that Xenophon knew more of the matter than for some reason or other he chose to tell. The Athenians, he continues, displaced their ten generals, excepting Conon: but the cause of their dissatisfaction is not stated. Six of the eight who had been in the battle returned home

at once. On their return, Erasinides was immediately accused by Archidemus, who was at that time the popular leader, of embezzling public property and of misconduct in his command. He was committed to prison. Subsequently the other five were also committed to answer to the people for their conduct; and at the first assembly several persons, with Theramenes at their head, came forward to assert that the generals ought to be brought to trial for not saving their shipwrecked countrymen. The accused made short answer (for they were not allowed to speak at length, as they had a right to do), stating all that had passed; how they had resolved themselves to follow up their advantage, leaving Theramenes and Thrasybulus, men of military rank and confessed ability, to perform the other service. "These, if any," they said, "are the persons to blame; yet though they accuse us, we will not bring a false charge against them, of neglecting what the violence of the storm rendered it impossible to do*." And these statements they brought forward witnesses to prove.

This short defence made a considerable impression, and many persons offered to become sureties for the accused. But the evening had now closed in, and it was said to be too dark to distinguish the show of hands. The matter was therefore adjourned to the next assembly, and it was voted that in the mean time the council should determine in what manner the generals should be tried,—a precaution which shows that they were not meant to have fair play, since the form of trial was as distinctly settled in Athens as in England; but it gave the accused full opportunity for making his defence, and therefore did not suit the purpose of the prosecutors. In the mean time came on the festival called Apaturia,

* Xenophon. Hellenica, lib. i. c. 7.

at which members of the same family and the same tribe met in social intercourse; and Theramenes took advantage of the kindly feelings excited upon the occasion to raise a prejudice against his intended victims, by sending about the city men dressed in black with their heads shaven, in the characters of relations of those who had been lost at Arginusæ.

At the next general assembly Callixenus explained the scheme of trial recommended by the council. "The people," he said, "had already heard the charge and the answer to it (an answer, be it remembered, which had been limited to a few words), and might therefore proceed at once to vote. Two vases therefore would be set apart to each tribe, and those who thought the generals culpable for not saving the wrecked crews, would cast their ball into the one, those who did not think them culpable into the other. If the majority were of the former opinion, the punishment would be death and confiscation of property." At this period a man came forward with a story that he had saved his own life on a flour-barrel, and that his dying comrades charged him, if he himself escaped, to tell the Athenians that the generals had abandoned those citizens who had so well served their country. Euryptolemus, a name which occurs in history only on this occasion, made a stand in favour of the accused, and threatened to prosecute Callixenus for submitting an illegal proposition to the assembly, and a part concurred with him; but the majority cried, that it was a fine thing if any one should say that the people might not do as it liked: and Lyciscus proposed, that all who interfered with the proceedings of the assembly should be included in the same vote with the generals. Euryptolemus therefore was compelled to let things take their course. Still the presidents of the assembly refused to propose an illegal question; but they were frightened and overborne by

clamour, except the celebrated Socrates, who steadily refused to act contrary to law. Eurymtolemus made another attempt to procure the generals leave to plead their own cause, by moving an amendment to the proposition of Callixenus; but he failed; the scheme of the council was agreed to, and by a majority of votes sentence of death was passed upon the eight generals present at Arginusæ. Those six who had been unlucky enough to return to Athens, were forthwith executed.

Not long after, Xenophon adds, the Athenians repented of what they had done, and voted that those who had deceived the people should be prosecuted, and find sureties for their appearance. Other civil contests arose, which gave them an opportunity of escape. Callixenus, at a later period, returned to Athens; lived for a time the object of hate to all, and died of hunger in a time of famine*.

The Germans, by the report of Tacitus, held solemn and deep drinking bouts for the consideration of all important business, upon the old maxim that in wine there is no deceit; but they took care to reconsider their decision the next morning. Some court of temperate review would have preserved the Athenians from many heinous crimes, into which they were led by a temper unusually excitable, and when ruled by prejudice and passion, less fitted to judge wisely and equitably than the phlegmatic temper of the Germans, even under the influence of strong drink. With Theramenes and the accusers this was plainly a party measure, undertaken in total recklessness of right or wrong. In these corrupt motives the people could have no share; on the contrary, they seem to have been acted on at first by a right feeling of indignation at the alleged abandonment of meritorious citizens. Their fault lay in the

* Xenoph. Hellen. lib. i. cap. 6, 7.

readiness with which they discarded gratitude to entertain suspicion; in the blind fury with which, overleaping all law in jealously asserting the people's omnipotence, they followed a mere impulse, a delusion, which the least exercise of judicial calmness would have dispelled. It is true that, when the reign of passion was over, and they returned to their senses, they rendered such amends for their precipitance as were then in their power. But such tardy repentance could neither repair nor expiate the wrong committed; and Athenian repentance generally came too late. Prompt in action, both from temper and from the forms of the state, which required no revision of a decree of the people, no assent from any concurring authority, performance followed close upon resolve. Of the many cruel edicts, repented or unrepented, uttered by the Athenian people, the revocation of the decree against the Mitylenæans, by which all male citizens were condemned to death, is the only one where repentance came in time. It seems a fitting judgment that the signal victory of Arginusæ was the last gained during the war; and that in the next year it was followed by the still more signal defeat at Ægospotami, which laid Athens prostrate at the feet of her haughty rival.

Not strictly analogous to the prosecution of the generals, but a still more memorable example of the cruelty and ingratitude to which party spirit can rouse even a phlegmatic people like the Dutch, the very antipodes of the Athenians in temper, is the murder of the brothers De Witt. Both illustrious, though not equally so, to the elder Holland owes deeper obligations than to any other of her citizens, except those great captains who burst the Spanish yoke. These obligations, and De Witt's high qualities, are best described by a writer qualified to do justice to the subject by the affection of a friend, as

well as the penetration of a statesman—Sir William Temple.

"The chief direction of the affairs of Holland had, for eighteen years, been constantly in the hands of their Pensionary De Witt, a minister of the greatest authority and sufficiency, the greatest application and industry, ever known in their state. In the course of his ministry, he and his party had reduced, not only all the civil charges of the government in this province, but in a manner all the military commands of the army, out of the hands of persons affectionate to the Prince of Orange, into those esteemed more sure and fast to the interests of their more popular state. And all this had been attended for so long a course of years with the perpetual success of their affairs, by the growth of their trade, power, and riches at home, and the consideration of their neighbours abroad; yet the general humour of kindness in the people to their own form of government under the Princes of Orange, grew up with the age and virtues of the young Prince, so as to raise the prospect of some unavoidable revolutions among them, for several years before it arrived. And we have seen it grow to that height in this present year, upon the Prince's coming to the two-and-twentieth year of his age (the time assigned him by their constitution for entering upon the public charges of their milice), that though it had found them in peace, it must have occasioned some violent sedition in their state; but meeting with the conjuncture of a foreign invasion, it broke out into so furious a rage of the people, and such general tumults through the whole country, as ended in the blood of their chief ministers; in the displacing all that were suspected to be of their party throughout the government; in the full restitution of the Prince's authority, to the highest point any of his ancestors had ever enjoyed; but withal in such a dis-

traction of their councils and their actions, as made way for the easy successes of the French invasion; for the loss of almost five of their provinces in two months time, and for the general presages of utter ruin to their state*."

At the early age of twenty-eight, the firmness and talents displayed by John De Witt in public life had raised him to the chief magistracy of the United Provinces, at a difficult period, when they were engaged in war with England, then under the vigorous direction of Cromwell. That honourable station De Witt held for twenty years, during which that severe war between England and Holland broke out, which was terminated, much to the glory of the latter country, by the expedition up the Medway, and the burning of the English fleet at Sheerness. Of this bold attempt he was himself the adviser. Republican by birth, (for his father had been imprisoned in consequence of his steady opposition to the house of Orange,) the whole bent of his policy was to frustrate the attempts of the Orange party, who wished to reinstate the young Prince, afterwards William III. of England, in the power and dignities possessed of old times by his family; and as the interests of William were espoused by Charles II. of England, De Witt was induced to seek a counterpoise by cultivating the friendship of France. In consequence of this predilection the war of 1665 broke out, which, after a series of severely contested battles, was terminated by the expedition above mentioned.

De Witt's steady resistance to the elevation of the house of Orange of course procured for him the sincere hatred of the Orange party, who were powerful enough, at different periods, to embarrass his government; still for fifteen years he held his high office of Grand Pensionary of Holland, and at the

* Temple, Essay on the Origin and Nature of Government.

end of that time was re-elected for a further term of five years. But in the last year, in 1672, the French and English united to declare war against Holland; a powerful army invaded the United Provinces, and William, upon whom the chief military command was conferred, was utterly unable to make head against them. A loud outcry was now raised against all who had ever shown any disposition to support French politics, and De Witt, above all others, became the object of popular hatred. One night he was attacked and severely wounded by a party of assassins, a danger to which the simplicity of his habits, well befitting the chief magistrate of a republic, gave free access. For "his habit was grave, plain, and popular; his table what only served turn for his family, or a friend; his train was only one man, who performed all the menial service of his house at home, and upon his visits of ceremony, putting on a plain livery cloak, attended his coach abroad; for upon other occasions he was seen usually in the streets on foot and alone, like the commonest burgher of the town. Nor was this manner of life affected, but was the general fashion and mode among all the magistrates of the state*."

While De Witt was kept at home by his wounds, the people of Holland demanded universally the repeal of the perpetual edict, as it was called, by which the Prince of Orange was for ever excluded from the stadtholdership of that province; and it was accordingly repealed. Cornelius De Witt, the brother of John, a man distinguished both in the naval and civil service of his country, was with difficulty induced to sign the revocation of the edict. When told that an armed crowd surrounded his house, threatening his life, if he did not consent to the repeal, "So many bullets," he said, "passed over my head in the late

* Temple, Observations on the United Provinces, chap. ii.

engagement, that I have no fear left, and I would rather wait for another than sign this paper." Shortly after, this brave and manly soldier was charged with being concerned in a plot to murder the Prince of Orange. The informer and only witness, Tichelaer, was a person of infamous character; yet on such evidence as this Cornelius De Witt was thrown into prison at the Hague, and cruelly tortured to extort confession of a plot, the very existence of which, without such a forced confession, could not be established. He bore the trial with unshaken constancy, protesting that if they cut him to pieces, they should not make him confess a thing which he had never even thought of. It is said that under the hands of the executioner he repeated the celebrated lines of Horace:—

Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida, &c.

Finding it impossible to extort a confession, the court before which he was tried proceeded to pass sentence to the following effect: "The Court of Holland, having examined the documents presented to it by the public prosecutor, the examinations and cross-examinations of the prisoner, and his defence, and having examined all that can throw light on this matter, declares the prisoner stripped of all his offices and dignities, banishes him from the provinces of Holland and West Friesland, without leave ever to return on pain of a severer punishment, and orders him to pay the costs of the prosecution*."

From the technical form in which this document is given in the original, and the signatures appended

* Histoire de la Vie et de la Mort des deux illustres Frères, Corneille et Jean De Witt. Liv. ii. c. 11.

to it, it appears to be a literal copy of the sentence as delivered by the court. We may observe, therefore, that neither the nature of the charge against De Witt, nor the extent to which it was proved against him, are specified. This is strong evidence of an intent to oppress him to the utmost. Where all is honest, men do not seek to hide the grounds of their decrees. The sentence is every way unjustifiable: if De Witt was guilty, he deserved death, and there can be no doubt but that, could a conviction have been procured, the extreme punishment would have been inflicted; if not, he was entitled to a free acquittal. To inflict infamy and banishment for a suspected crime, even granting too charitable a supposition, that suspicion was entertained, was to graft the worst prerogative of tyranny upon republican institutions. Yet unjustifiable as the sentence was, its leniency gave great offence to the people, who were devoted at this period to the house of Orange, and possessed with a full belief of Cornelius De Witt's guilt.

John De Witt meanwhile had recovered from his wounds, and finding that in the then state of public feeling, his continuance at the head of affairs was alike undesirable for himself and unpleasing to the country, he resigned his office. When his brother was sentenced to exile, he went himself to receive him on his delivery from prison, and probably to do him more honour and testify his own sense of the malice of the charge, and the unworthiness of the treatment which he had received, repaired to the Hague in his coach and four, a state which, as we have said, he was not used to affect. This bravado, though natural, was against the advice of his friends, and not consistent with the usual temper of the man; and it proved even more unfortunate than ill judged. The people, collected by the unusual spectacle, began to murmur at the presumption of one suspected trai-

tor coming in state to insult the laws, and triumph in the escape of a traitor brother from a deserved death. De Witt went to the prison to receive his brother and convey him to his own house; but Cornelius, with his customary high spirit, replied that having suffered so much, being innocent, he would not leave the prison like a culprit, but rather remain and appeal from the sentence. John De Witt endeavoured to shake his resolution, but without effect.

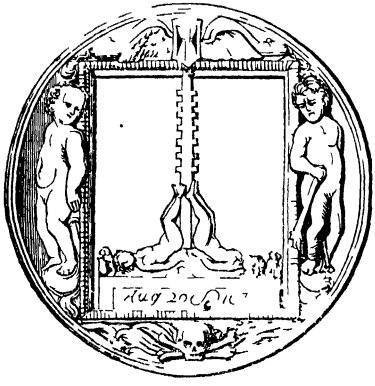
Meanwhile Tichelaer, the informer, at the instigation, as we are led to believe, of some more powerful persons whose names are studiously concealed, was busily employed in stirring up the populace to riot. Apprehending some disturbance, the states of Holland and West Friesland, which at the time were sitting at the Hague, requested the Prince of Orange to repair thither with a military force. Meanwhile the tumult spread from the lowest people to the burghers, and a furious mob collected round the gates of the prison in which the brothers were still remaining. The military force which had



Obverse of medal struck to commemorate the massacre of the De Witts.

been sent for did not arrive, and that which was in the city was drawn off by the orders of some unnamed person. Actuated by fear, or some worse motive, the gaoler opened the gates, a few of the ringleaders burst in, the brothers were dragged with violence from their chamber, and brutally massacred as soon as they reached the street. We abstain from giving the details of the murder, still more from relating the unequalled atrocities which were perpetrated upon the corpses. But they were dragged to the gibbet, mutilated, and publicly suspended naked by the feet with the heads downward; and the mangled limbs of these upright and patriotic men were offered for sale, and bought at prices of fifteen, twenty, and thirty sols.

According to one story, the gaoler induced John De Witt to visit his brother by a false message, and being in the prison he was not allowed to quit it. A similar message was sent to their father, but being absent from home he escaped the snare. The gaoler, it is said, acted under the orders of a "person of such quality, that he was obliged to obey." In this ac-



Reverse of the same medal.—Bodies on the scaffold.

count, as well as in that which we have above followed, there is an evident wish to throw the blame of the murder on the Prince of Orange, or at least on the leaders of his party It is asserted, however, that he never spoke of it without the greatest horror. Charges of such magnitude should not be lightly made; nor is there any evidence to fix guilt upon that distinguished monarch. But that there was culpable neglect, if not wilful connivance, seems certain; and the proceedings of the court which sentenced Cornelius, show that the agents of government were nowise squeamish, whatever was the conduct of their chief. Nor did William's subsequent conduct betray much concern either for the interests of justice, or of his own reputation; for though the states of Holland voted the murder "detestable in their eyes, and the eyes of all the world," and requested the stadtholder to take proper measures to avenge it, none of the murderers were ever brought to justice. The flimsy pretext for this neglect was, that it would be dangerous to inquire into a deed in which the principal burghers of the Hague were concerned*.

After De Witt's death all his papers were submitted to the most rigorous examination in hope of discovering something which should confirm the popular notion of his being traitorously in league with France. One of the persons appointed to perform this service being asked what had been found in De Witt's papers, replied, "What could we have found?—nothing but probity†."

We cannot better conclude than with the reflections of the greatest of modern orators upon this event. "The catastrophe of De Witt, the wisest, best, and most truly patriotic minister that ever appeared upon

* Histoire de la Vie et de la Mort des deux illustres Frères, Corneille et Jean De Witt.

† General Biography.

the public stage, as it was an act of the most crying injustice and ingratitude, so likewise it is the most completely disencouraging example that history affords to the lovers of liberty. If Aristides was banished, he was also recalled. If Dion was repaid for his service to the Syracusans by ingratitude, that ingratitude was more than once repented of. If Sidney and Russell died upon the scaffold, they had not the cruel mortification of falling by the hands of the people; ample justice was done to their memory, and the very sound of their names is still animating to every Englishman attached to their glorious cause. But with De Witt fell also his cause and his party; and although a name so respected by all who revere virtue and wisdom when employed in their noblest sphere, the political service of the public, yet I do not know that even to this day any public honours have been paid by them to his memory *."

The conclusion and the result of the Peloponnesian war may here be given in a very few words. The battle of Arginusæ was fought B. C. 406, in the autumn. It seemed to restore the sovereignty of the sea to Athens, and to replace her in that commanding position which had been lost in consequence of the unfortunate expedition to Sicily. So severely was the defeat felt at Sparta, that the Lacedæmonians again made overtures for peace, which were rejected through the instrumentality of Cleophon, a popular leader of the day †, as formerly similar overtures had been rejected by the influence of Cleon. But the government of Athens, though elated by success, does not appear to have been such as to render a continuance of it probable, as far as we can judge from

* Fox, History of James II. p. 29.

† Clinton, Fast. Hellen. For a notice of this worthy, see the Frogs of Aristophanes, v. 677, ed., Bekker.

the scanty records which exist of this period. The rapid and violent changes which had taken place, and such acts as the execution of the generals who commanded at Arginusæ, were of a nature to destroy all concord and all feeling of confidence; and the administration again resorted to the inefficient course of appointing a board of generals to command the fleet. Of the six who composed it, Conon alone is known to us, except in reference to this transaction. The Lacedæmonian fleet in the Asiatic seas was now under the able guidance of Lysander; and by his good management, and in consequence of the culpable negligence of the Athenian generals, the Athenian fleet of 180 triremes was surprised while lying in the Hellespont at Ægospotami, and captured, with the sole exception of nine ships belonging to the division of Conon, who escaped in consequence of being more on his guard. "After this Lysander, calling a meeting of the confederates, proposed for their consideration the question, what was to be done with the prisoners. Then many accusations were brought against the Athenians, both for what they had already done amiss, and for what they had decreed to do if they got the victory; that they would cut off the right hand of every man taken alive; and that, having captured two triremes, one of Corinth and one of Andros, they had thrown overboard the crews of them. And it was Philocles (one of the Athenian generals) who put to death these men. And many other things were said, and it was resolved to put to death as many of the prisoners as were Athenians, except Adeimantus (another of the generals), who in the assembly had alone opposed the vote for cutting off the hands. And he, indeed, was accused by some of having betrayed the fleet. And Lysander, having first questioned Philocles how that man ought to be treated who had thrown overboard

the Corinthians and Andrians, thus being the first to ill-use Greeks against national law, slew him*."

The number of those who thus perished, according to Plutarch †, was 3,000: a wholesale destruction, in cold blood, from which the mind revolts. It admits of no palliation from the alleged pretext of the violation of international law; for it is hard to say which party commenced that system of military execution, which forms the especial stigma of this portion of Greek history, and it is at least certain that in this stage of the contest neither belligerent could have a right to upbraid the other with aggravating the evils of war by unnecessary cruelty. The defeat of Ægospotami was conclusive. Conon, not daring to appear in Athens after the example of Arginusæ, and aware probably that farther resistance was hopeless, bent his course to Cyprus, despatching the sacred ship Paralus to carry news of the defeat to Athens. It arrived by night, and the calamity being announced, "the wailing passed from Peiræus to the city, along the long walls, from one person to another; so that in this night no one slept, not only through grief for the dead, but far more because the living expected to meet the same treatment as they had given to the Melians, a colony of Lacedæmon, after having besieged and taken their city, and to the citizens of Histiœa, and Scione, and Torone, and Ægina, and to many other of the Greeks. And the next day a meeting was held, at which it was resolved to block up all the harbours save one, and to put the walls into good condition, and set guards, and to prepare the city in all respects for a siege‡."

These were the efforts of despair. Certain of suc-

* ἀπέσφαξεν—slew him with his own hand, it should seem; a pleasant office for the commander-in-chief of a civilized nation. Xenoph. Hellen. ii. c. 1.

† Life of Lysander. ‡ Xen. Hellen. ii. c. 2.

cess, since there was now no enemy to raise the siege, or to effect a diversion, the Lacedæmonians blockaded Athens by land and sea, and in a few months the spirit of the people was so subdued by famine that they surrendered on humiliating terms, shortly after the expiration of the twenty-seventh year of the war. The walls of the city were destroyed; her ships of war, with the exception of twelve, were given up; it was covenanted to follow the guidance of Lacedæmon as subordinate allies; and, under the superintendence of the Lacedæmonian army, the democracy, the pride of the Athenians, was exchanged for the short-lived form of government known in Greek history by the name of the Tyranny of the Thirty. This state of subjection did not last long, but the history of the circumstances under which it was shaken off belongs not to our present subject. The epoch at which we have now arrived is a great crisis in the history of Greece: another volume might, at some future time, be devoted to illustrating the most remarkable events which occurred between this period and the final extinction of Greek independence.

INDEX OF PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS.

Alp Arslan, vol. i. page 95-6.
Antony, retreat of, from Parthia, 228, 230
Arginusæ, battle of, ii. 316, 326.
Aristides, i. 397, 400. ii. 3, 4.
Aristogiton, i. 181-5.
Aristomenes, i. 38, 63.
Aristophanes, Knights of, ii. 244, 259.
Armada, Spanish, i. 377, 392.
Athenians, expedition against Sicily, ii. 285, 346.
Athens, plague of, ii. 32, 40.

Bajazet, imprisoned by Tamerlane, i. 88.
———, his treatment of French prisoners, i. 90-5.
Brooke, death of Lord, i. 141.
Brown, execution of John, ii. 384-7.
Buchan, Countess of, imprisoned by Edward I., i. 89, 90.

Caligula, i. 141, 151.
Cambyses, i 119, 138.
Cid, Chronicle of, i. 280, 283.
Cimon, policy of, ii. 4, 7.
Circumvallation, lines of, ii. 104, 130.
Cleomenes, i. 139, 140.
Cleon, ii. 230, 260.
Comedy, Greek, account of, ii. 239, 243.
Constantinople, factions of circus, ii. 211, 223.
———— plague of, ii. 40, 47.
Corcyrean sedition, ii. 184, 200.
Crassus, retreat and death of, i. 213, 227.
Crœsus, i. 78, 81.
Cylon, insurrection of, i. 164-6.

Darius, invasion of Scythia by, i. 204, 212.
Dragoschan, battle of, i. 334, 336.

Education, Athenians, ii. 14, 20.
England, state of, under first Norman kings, i. 21, 25.

Fatalism, i. 166, 171.
Florence, plague of, ii. 49, 64.

Greek history, mythic period of, i. 7, 9, 19, 20.
Guesclin, Bertrand du, treatment by Black Prince, i. 106-8, 112, 118.
Guthrie, James, execution of, ii. 389, 394.

Harmodius, i. 181-5.
Hawkwood, retreat of Sir J., ii. 312-5.
Hereward le Wake, i. 53-8.
Hermæ, mutilation of, ii. 283-4.
Hipparchus and Hippias, i. 179, 186.
Huss, John, ii. 366, 377.

Jacquerie, ii. 206, 211.
Jacques, battle of St., i. 224-8.
Jerome of Prague, ii. 377-9.
Jerusalem, siege of, ii. 132-7.
John, King of France, treatment by Black Prince, 1, 108, 111.
Julian, Emperor, invasion of Parthia, and death, 1, 230, 240.

Knights of Aristophanes, ii. 244, 259.

London, plague of, ii. 86, 101.

Magdeburg, siege of, ii. 153, 167.
Marathon, battle of, i. 252, 276.
Massacre of September, 1792, ii. 223-9.
Medici, Cosmo de, i. 187, 193.
——— Piero, i. 193-4.
——— Lorenzo and Julian, i. 194, 203.
Messenians, early history of, i. 38, 53.
Milan, plague of, ii. 64, 81.
Miltiades, i. 393, 397.
Morgarten, battle of, i. 298, 304.

Napoleon, retreat from Moscow, i. 242, 256.
Ney, ditto, ii. 307, 311.
Nika sedition, ii. 216, 223.
Numantia, siege of, ii. 118, 121.

Oates, Titus, ii. 260, 282.
Ostend, siege of, ii. 140, 152.

Paul, Emperor, i. 151, 162.

Pazzi, conspiracy of, i. 196, 203.
Pedro, Don. King of Castile, i. 29, 33.
Peloponnesian war, origin of, ii. 20, 25.
——————— end of, ii. 334-7.
Pericles, policy of, ii. 7, 14.
Persecutions, civil and religious, ii. 338, 409.
Pisistratus, i. 171-9.
Plague, historians who have described it, ii. 26-7;—principal recorded, 28, 31;—of Athens, 32, 40;—of Constantinople, 40-7;—of Florence, 48, 64;—of Milan, 64, 81;—medical treatment and state of science, 82-6;—of London, 86, 101.
Platæa, siege of, ii. 102, 117.
Popish plot, ii. 260, 282.
Portobello, taken by Vernon, ii. 237-9.
Power, effects of absolute, i. 120-6.
Prelacy, attempted to be restored in Scotland, ii. 380, 394.
Presbyterians, persecution of, ibid.
Prisoners of war, treatment of, i. 78, 118.

Reding, Aloys, i. 304-5.
Reedman, Sir Matthew, anecdote from Froissart, i. 103-6.
Reformation in England, ii. 394, 409.
Réole, la, siege of, ii. 137-8.
Retreat of Darius, from Scythia, i. 210-2;—Antony, from Parthia, 228, 230;—Julian in Assyria, 230, 240;—Napoleon from Moscow, 242, 256;—Athenians from Syracuse, ii. 291, 308;—Ney in Russia, 307, 311;—Hawkwood in Lombardy, 312-5.
Rome, civil wars of, compared with seditions in Greece, ii. 202-5.
Roncesvalles, battle of, i. 336, 347.

Salamis, battle of, i. 348, 367.
Scandinavia, compared with Greece in its early state, i. 7, 18
Sempach, battle of, i. 306, 313. Law of, 329.
September, massacre of, ii. 223-9.
Sicilian expedition, ii. 285, 307.
Siege of La Valette, i. 330-3;—of Leyden, i. 367, 377; of Platæa, ii. 102, 117;—methods of the ancients, their rudeness and little improvement, until the use of gunpowder, 103, 121-4, 130-2. Introduction of cannon, 138-9. Siege of Numantia, 118, 121;—of Tyre, 124-6;—Syracuse, by Marcellus, 127, 130;—by Athenians, 290;—of Jerusalem, 132-7;—of La Réole, 137-8;—of Ostend, 140, 153;—of Magdeburg, 153. 167;—of Zaragoza, 167, 182.
Sobieski, John, King of Poland, i. 285. 297.

Socrates, history, character, and death of, ii. 338, 365.
Sophists, ii 15, 20.
Sphacteria, capture of Spartans at, ii. 232 6
Syracuse, besieged by Marcellus, ii. 127, 130.—by Athenians, 290.

Taylor, Rowland, burnt for heresy, ii. 396, 409
Themistocles, character and policy of, i. 400, 408
Thermopylæ, battle of, i 314, 323
Tours, battle of, i 277-9.
Triumphs, Roman, i 83-6
Trojan War, i 34 7
Tyre, siege of, ii 134-6.

Valerian, treatment by Sapor, i. 87-8
Valette, siege of La, i 330-5
Vienna, siege by Turks, and battle, i 285, 297

Wallace, i 58 77
Watts, massacre of De, ii. 325, 354.

Xerxes, invasion of Greece by, i 314, 324, 348, 367.

Zaragoza, siege of, ii. 167, 182.

THE END

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